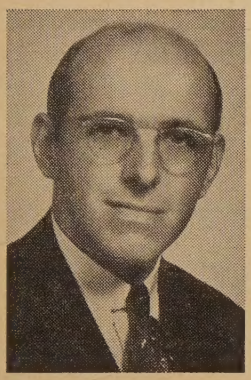
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



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Clark W. Hunt:

The People's Choice

William B. Ward • A Peculiar People
Warren Carr • The Cross Is Not Deductible
Theodore P. Ferris • The Palm Sunday Mirror
Markus Barth • Nought for Your Shame
Charles E. Morton • Personal Integrity on Trial

LEE C. MOOREHEAD
THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF GRACE

VOL. XXXII, No. 3 MARCH 1961

The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

The Point at Issue

SIR: Thank you for publishing a review of my book, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching,* in the January issue of *The Pulpit.*

While I appreciate the reviewer's commendation of the final chapter ("worth the cost of the book"), I must take exception to at least his first major criticism. On the basis of an alleged misreading of Mark 1:21, 22, 27, he judges that I have misspent my energies "scrambling up the helpful distinctions." The point at issue is the relationship between preaching and teaching. Along with many other writers on the subject, I hold that Dodd has made too sharp a cleavage between the two. The evidence of the New Testament is that the words are used with considerable overlapping.

Evidently thinking that I have misread "preaching" into the verses in question (and thereby destroying the foundations of my own argument) the reviewer indicates that a careful reading of the text shows that Jesus is here speaking of *teaching.* With this I perfectly agree. In fact, that is precisely why I quoted the verses! Didn't the reviewer go on to read the very next sentence, "Yet [Mark] 1:38 indicates that Jesus viewed His ministry there as one of *preaching*" (p. 40, italics mine)? The point is that since the Capernaum ministry is referred to in the same context both as *teaching* and as *preaching* it would be unwise to understand the two activities as entirely distinct. In that I am later cautioned "to exercise a rigid discipline in the use of quotations," I would request the same consideration.

I could speak to the other objections as well but would rather leave such matters to the discretion of the reader. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify this one point.

ROBERT MOUNCE
Bethel College
St. Paul, Minn.

Helpful

SIR: The following three questions have been helpful in my sermon preparation:

1. *What is God saying?* I believe that God has a word to speak in every passage of scripture and that it is the preacher's responsibility to discover that word and present it to his people in such a way that they know it to be the Word of God.

2. *What do I really believe about this?* This question keeps me honest and concrete. If I am not able to identify myself with the Word of God

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The Pulpit

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VOLUME XXXII MARCH 1961 No. 3

The Third Diluting Myth: Sentimentalism

THE third myth which dilutes our religion is *Sentimentalism*. It is impossible to define, shameful to criticize and difficult to reform. It is impossible to define because the difference between sentiment, a wholesome emotion, and sentimentality, a diseased emotion, depends upon timing, propriety, proportion, cause and objective. Let us say that sentimentalism is an excess of feeling, feeling which is disproportionate to its cause and to the object toward which it is directed. To give a child the affection due a child is sentiment; to give a poodle the affection due a baby is sentimentalism. Moreover, sentimentalism is affected sentiment, applied rather than genuine, superficial rather than substantial. Sentimentalism drops a visible tear when the flag passes by — and cheats the revenue department; it votes for the party grandfather belonged to; it gets drunk to celebrate Mother's Day; it saves the baby bootees and hates the growing boy.

Add the adjective "religious" to the word "sentimentalism" and you have a potent combination. Religious sentimentalism is just like any other kind of sentimentalism except that it has a richer field to work in. Religious sentimentalism writes "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," while it ships slaves and smuggles opium. It takes a chummy view of "dear old God," calls him "the man upstairs," sings possessively about walking hand in hand with him as though the relationship of God and man levels them to that kind of informal equality. It paints of Christ portraits on which there is no sweat and no stain of blood. It sends missionaries to Africa to convert Negroes but will not in this land break bread with converted Negroes. It spins pretty little devotionals about religion, sweet little talks and services which divorce religion from all the mystery and the terror and the dread of life. Religious sentimentalism writes pamphlets about the birds of the Bible and the trees of the Bible and the flowers of the Bible but ignores the God of the Bible whose wrath "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" and who to save men has to sacrifice himself.

Sentimentalism is shameful to criticize because of the possibility that it may be misunderstood. Sentiment and sentimentality express themselves through the same words, the same tears and sometimes the same deeds. When Dostoevski's distraught captain, in *The Brothers Karamazov,* troubled by the hunger, cold and nakedness of his family, nevertheless throws into the snow the roubles Alyosha gave him he appears dramatically and rashly sentimental but through the sentimental gesture speaks the wounded dignity of a proud and beaten man. We must ask what the sentiment symbolizes, how it is motivated, toward what objectives it moves, whether it means to take the vital forms of life, before we reject it as shallow and artificial. To some observers the munching of bread and the sipping of wine are sentimental and meaningless gestures but to those who know the realities in which the act is rooted it is a "means of grace." Sentimentalism is a diseased emotion but diagnosis can be too hasty.

Sentimentalism in the pulpit and among the parishioners is difficult to reform. It has all the characteristics of a narcotic. It allays sensibility to what goes on in the real world of man's struggle. It relieves pain, personal pain and the empathic sufferings of compassion. In overdoses it produces the stupors which discharge all sense of personal responsibility. And unless checked early it demands that the addict indulge in it more and more to maintain the level of its satisfactions. It is not easy to persuade a people who see religion wholly in terms of sentimentality that they must give up the drugs of their religion. Yet we must try.

When our lives and the lives of our people become actually and deeply spiritual we shall have no need to sentimentalize about their spirituality. When we truly take up the rough cross of our Christ, we shall rebuke any man who lays upon it the weight of a single gaudy word or tacks to it a decorative ribbon. When we gaze on the one side into the pits of man's suffering and aloneness and lostness and on the other side toward the stern judgment and infinite mercy of the God who seeks him, we shall spurn the flimsy threads of dainty maxims and clever sayings and maudlin songs which make up so much of our religion and cling to a Christ who spurned men who said "Lord, Lord" in neglect of the will of the Father.

— KYLE HASELDEN

The People's Choice

By Clark W. Hunt

Mark 15:1-15.

WE commonly think of that first Holy Week as a drama played out by a relatively few characters. Jesus and Judas, Peter and Pilate, Caiphas and Herod — these we would list as the important, decisive characters in that original pageant; the power and persistence of which this week turn the steps of countless millions to churches and their thoughts to the cross.

But we oversimplify it when we suppose that we have wrapped up the responsibility for the events of that momentous week in a few names that the ages have preserved. We are tempted to overlook the part that the crowd played in that pageant; the numberless, nameless people of Jerusalem, their ranks swollen by pilgrims from the surrounding countryside who had converged on the city for the Passover celebration; the common people who were contemporary to the greatest event in history.

Surely the gospel-writers did not forget the weight that the crowd carried in writing the record of Holy Week. Luke tells us that earlier in Holy Week — Monday or Tuesday, perhaps — the high-ranking ecclesiastics were impatient to seize Jesus and bring him to trial, but, says Luke's gospel, "they feared the people." The "hosannas" of Palm Sunday were still ringing in the priests' ears and they understood that the climate of public opinion was against them. So the strategy of the opposition is perfectly clear in Mark's account of the trial before Pilate: "The chief priests worked upon the crowd. . . ." How they must have worked upon the crowd — planting rumors, fanning fears, stirring up prejudice — until, on Friday, the people of Jerusalem were ready to condone a crucifixion they would have resisted on Palm Sunday.

I am aware that there has been long conjecture across the ages as to the composition of the crowds of that first Holy Week. Some scholars have opined that the voices which on Sunday cried "hosanna" were not necessarily those which on Friday shouted, "Crucify him." These have held that the crowd in front of Pilate's *praetorium* were the sweepings of the slums of Jerusalem, picked and paid for their services. This may have been. But the fact remains that a subtle change had taken place in the atmosphere of Jerusalem and the enemies of Jesus, expert in temperature readings, sensed on Thursday that they could then do what they could never have done on Monday. "Behind all earth's tragedies," wrote Henry Sloane Coffin, "there is a public whose state of mind has much to do with the central event." And Calvary is no exception. We cannot dismiss the Holy Week crowds as innocent bystanders.

I have tried to imagine what it might have been like if I had lived in Jerusalem at that time, witness to the original Passion play, and I ask you to do the same now. What would we have said and done if we had been tapped, not for the major speaking roles, but for parts in that mass which the gospels keep referring to as "the crowd"? I have wondered what it would be like if I, a middle-class resident of Jerusalem, had walked down David Street that Friday morning, my attention attracted by a noisy, milling crowd in front of the Roman *praetorium*. Surely I should have stopped to ask, "What's going on here?" And the man next to me might have answered, "It's this Jesus, the prophet from Galilee. They arrested him last night. Seems that he has been saying some pretty hotheaded things that will get us into more trouble with Rome. Looks like he's got to go."

What would my thoughts have been as I stood there? Would I have remembered the comment of a trader from Magdala that I had met some time back, how this Jesus had transformed a disreputable woman from his town by the name of Mary; or the word of a cousin in Jericho, of the amazing difference in the life of a tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus since he met Jesus; or the excitement of a neighbor returning from travels in which he had heard Jesus speak? Would I have remembered the previous Sunday when I had laid

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ny eyes on Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem and he had seemed to lay his eyes on me with the most profound caring and concern that I had ever seen? And would I remember the surge of enthusiasm and expectancy that had swept like a tide through the crowd, as with one voice we had shouted, "Hosanna. Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord."

But whatever my memories, they would soon be dispersed by the commotion now in front of me. There was Pilate, up on the balcony, so obviously distraught and disturbed. In front of him were two men, both with hands bound in front of them in the fashion of prisoners. The one I recognized as Jesus — but the other? "Who's the other prisoner?" I might have asked, only to be told that he was Barabbas, the common criminal whose nefarious exploits had become legend in Jerusalem. And then I should have witnessed that incredible scene in which a vague and vacillating Pilate surrendered his own convictions to the incessant clamor of the crowd and gave them Jesus to be crucified. And I should have seen the hostility of the crowd spreading like a brush fire to the minds and manners of the Roman soldiers, who proceeded to have a field day with their prisoner. One of them found a bramble bush and twisted some branches into a crown and crushed it on Jesus' head, another grabbed a purple robe and put it on him, and they began to roar and jeer along with the crowd, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And some of them began to hit him and beat him until one of their superiors must have called for order lest Calvary's business be prematurely concluded. Then they brought forth the heavy beam of his own cross and ordered him to carry it, and there I should have witnessed the start of the painful descent to Calvary.

And if I had been there that day, as a good, respectable resident of Jerusalem, member of the synagogue, I wonder what I would have done. I can't quite believe that I would have joined the chorus, "Crucify him." I think I would have been hurt to see the shame and suffering that now were his. But I am under no illusions that I would have sprung to his defense, stepping out of the crowd and crying, "You can't do that to this man. He's innocent" — and offering to carry his cross. No, I know pretty well what I would have said to myself and to others that day. The first thing I would say would be, *"I don't want to get involved in this."* Perhaps I might have felt a sense of sorrow that this should happen to a good man, perhaps tears might have welled up in my eyes and indignation in my soul, but some other considerations would spring to attention in my thinking as well — my job, my reputation, my family, indeed, perhaps my very life. And in the civil war that followed in my soul, I am afraid that I would have ended by keeping still and standing still.

For it still happens, doesn't it? Some issue, one side of which carries Christ's signature in writing that we cannot help but see, and we're scared to death to step out of the crowd and be counted on his side. So we ask for more time and refer it to committee and end up mouthing the old bromide: "It's fine to have ideals; but, after all, you've got to be practical." Or an invitation to shoulder some Christian responsibility that rather clearly has our name written on it, and we squirm when we think what it may mean in giving up our Sunday mornings, or our money, or our pleasures. "We just don't want to get quite so involved," we say. "So tied down." We don't want to be tied down and yet we are disciples of One who was willing to be nailed down for us.

The significance of Holy Week is that in contrast to the crowd who did not want to become involved there was the Christ who deliberately chose to become involved. It could have been otherwise, you know. But "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," fixing his eyes on the cross and quietly saying, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And back of that, God himself thinking that humanity was worth this supreme involvement. And Paul looking back on it could only shake his head in wonder and then the words fairly poured forth in his letter to the Corinthians: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." Maybe, on the other side of the cross, I could stand there thinking to myself, "I don't want to get involved in this" — but how can we who claim his name and sign stand on this side of the cross and say that?

The second shelter that my mind might have reached that first Good Friday is only a hop, skip and jump from the first. For in a matter of moments I should surely be telling myself, *"But this isn't my responsibility."* The story of the crucifixion reveals the most colossal buck-passing game in history. Nobody really wanted to accept the responsibility for putting Jesus to death. Caiphas delighted in saying it was Pilate's responsibility, Pilate passed to Herod, Herod back to Pilate, and at the end Pilate tried to squirm out of it by washing his hands in front of the crowd and saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood." And if anyone had come up to me, standing there in that crowd, and had said, "You know you're partly responsible for what's going on here," I would have so fiercely protested. "Who, me? Look, I'm just an innocent bystander. I just happened along."

Harold Cooke Phillips has said that getting into a group is like getting into an automobile. When two pedestrians accidentally bump each other there is apt to be mutual repentance. But when those same two people get into their cars and then bump

each other there is apt to be mutual recrimination. "Getting into a group, like getting into a car, reduces the sense of personal responsibility. And the bigger the group, the smaller the sense of responsibility."

And somehow the crowds are so large on the face of the earth today that who of us has much sense of responsibility for what is happening? We read the headlines and we feel like a spectator in the last and highest row in Yankee Stadium watching a game far below. Hunger in India — but what have I to do with that? The struggle for the minds of men in Asia and Africa — but what have I to do with that? The violence of racial explosions in South Africa and South U.S.A. — but what have I to do with that? TV scandals and payola — but what have I to do with that? And just as we finish convincing ourselves that all of this is no affair of ours, and just as we have wiped our hands over Pilate's washbowl, we look up and there's a cross and a Christ who somehow felt that he did have to carry "the whole world in his hands." Again, there are the words of Dr. Coffin: "Behind all earth's tragedies there is a public whose state of mind has much to do with the central event."

The significance of Holy Week is that in contrast to the crowd who did not feel responsible there was the Christ who did feel responsible. Have you heard about that 14-year-old boy in the Sunday school of Riverside Church in New York, who one Sunday volunteered an answer to the question as to why Christ should die? "Jesus," he said, "saw a lot of good in this world, and he didn't like the way it was being pushed around. Somebody had to take the rap and he took it." Which is a completely unorthodox but completely understandable description of what happened on Calvary. If you want it in the more stately language of the New Testament, here it is: "For God so loved the world that he gave his Son. . . ." "And this," that Son said, "is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." How can a man come within sight of the cross this week and say it's no affair of his what happens anywhere in the world save the square foot that his life occupies?

But something else there is that I should probably have thought and said as a member of the first Good Friday crowd, *"I'm sorry, but I'm too busy."* Somewhere along the way I might remember the errand that brought me down David Street in the first place that morning. Maybe my wife had sent me to the shop to buy food for dinner guests we were expecting; or maybe I had come to make sure that we could get in to the circus that was coming to Jerusalem that afternoon; or maybe I needed just a few more seeds to finish my spring planting. And keenly as I felt for the plight of this man whose destination was Calvary, there were some other things in my life that were really a little more pressing at the moment. If only it had been some other day and some other time!

Jesus was forever telling parables about respectable folk like that who were respectably busy — but with the wrong things. The priest and the Levite, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, hurrying along to important engagements and passing by the victim of the thieves. The foolish bridesmaids, busy all day with infinite details and passing up the preparation of their lamps. The people in the final judgment, handed their report cards for a lifetime and seeing how many opportunities for compassion they had passed by, "Inasmuch as you did it not. . . ." And now on that Good Friday in Jerusalem, something from each of these parables was being acted out in that divine drama.

Are we not ourselves the people of Jesus' parables, with our crowded schedules and our varied skills and our widespread interests? But if this day the author of life should close the book of life for us, what, precisely, could he or we point to and say, "Inasmuch as ye have done this unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me"? "I read in a book," the poet mused, "that a man called Christ went about doing good. It is very disconcerting to me that I am so easily satisfied with just going about." Again, it is the glory of Holy Week that in contrast to the busyness of the crowd, God thought himself not too busy with the management of the universe to keep an appointment upon that middle cross.

When I finish with the excuses that I fear I should have offered had I been there that day, it comes to me that there were a few — a very few — who did stand out from the crowd in a kind of service to the Master. One Simon Cyrene who carried the cross, even though he had no choice; the Roman soldier who moistened Jesus' lips when he cried, "I thirst"; the little band of followers who stood by the cross to the very end; a man by the name of Joseph of Arimathea who stepped forward and offered his tomb for a burying place. A strange assortment, so small a group that no one would have supposed that here was the bridge into the future rather than the bristling power of Rome.

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" Yes, you were there and I was there. And every Holy Week that comes is not just an anniversary of a far-off event in history. It is a reminder that the cross is of no age and of every age, that Christ is forever on trial. Or would it not be more accurate to say that people are forever on trial — in service that asks something of us, in truth that is having a hard time of it, in ideals that are being trampled on, in daily decisions that confront us. And this week, no less than that April week 1900 years ago, we, the people, move past his cross, and he looks out to ask, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"

What the Minister Preaches Can Become Something Other Than His Own

The Transforming Power of Grace*

By Lee C. Moorehead

IN HIS *Recollections,* Washington Gladden remarked that he could see no other place of influence in the world in which a man can be as free as in the Christian pulpit. Realizing that some preachers habitually wear the halters of cowardice and subserviency, he believed nonetheless that the minister has more freedom in speaking his mind than most moral teachers.

> I have been saying things, with no sense of restraint, during the last fifty years, that I should not have been so likely to say if I had been a journalist or a college professor. I have not always commanded the assent of all my auditors, but they have recognized my right to speak, and have never sought to muzzle me. I doubt if any other kind of work, in which a living was to be made, would have given me so large an opportunity as my churches in North Adams and Springfield and Columbus have given me to speak my deepest thought.[1]

Despite the many incursions against the freedom of the pulpit which exist today — and which have always existed — I share Gladden's faith. Seeking seriously to be "a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth," (2 Tim. 2:15) a minister will find himself committed to the freest of all professions. The professions of law, medicine, and teaching all have their glorious freedoms, but none is as finally free as the preacher in the pulpit. Though this may appear to be a cause of pride and exultation, it is certainly, when more profoundly understood, to be soberly accepted as an unmerited gift. Not only is it a gift, but an awesome responsibility, for, as Paul confessed, "if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. *For necessity is laid upon me.* Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16.) The preacher is free only because of a most peculiar and precious gift. It is not the gift of his own intellectual acumen, or his own native courage, or his human ability to love, or the forbearance of his laymen. That which makes him free is the sheer gift of God's grace.

No real preacher would dare to believe that either his freedom or his effectiveness is due to his own talents and merits. If he truly preaches the gospel he knows that he is under the absolute necessity of beseeching God for the outpouring of his grace. He needs that grace for two reasons: first, preaching is a daring, almost arrogant, certainly a presumptuous act. May a man pretend to speak for God? How could he dare open his mouth without calling upon the grace of God? And second, preaching is a *man* speaking to *men* the gospel which is a scandal unto the world. What is to prevent his courage from crumbling as he proclaims what people do not really want to hear, save the grace of God? Grace is required in every profession, but, by its very nature, immeasurably more in the ministry.

If the God whom we preach is so much greater than the jukebox images of "He!" and "The Man Upstairs," if God has created a world of incredible vastness and unfathomable mystery, if he dwells in light unapproachable, may a man stand in a pulpit and claim to be his spokesman? What an impertinence of the preacher it is to speak words for God! How can his words have meaning when his thoughts are not God's thoughts? What thoughts does he have to distinguish the words he claims to speak for God from the words men speak to him? What else is there to say except that when a man dares to speak the word of God, in his own words, he must first tremble and be transformed by the power of grace? He must learn to place himself in the hands of God, and he must know that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Preaching is crippled by acquiescence to the spirit of the times. Just as the atmosphere of the earth obscures our view of the limitless wonders of the universe, so do the frailties of the minister

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* From *Freedom of the Pulpit*
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[1] (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), pp. 415-416.

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This article is from Dr. Moorehead's book, Freedom of the Pulpit, *to be published by Abingdon Press on March 13.*

obstruct his vision of God. Striving always to bring the truth of God into sharper focus, he must honestly conclude, "For now we see in a mirror dimly." The limits and limitations of the preacher loom in the foreground of every sermon. Never can the realistic preacher take his place in the pulpit without fervently praying, as did the ancient psalmist, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise" (Ps. 51:15). He knows that he cannot *show forth* the glory of God until, by grace, God removes the dissension from his soul.

It takes a great deal of grace, for example, for the preacher to maintain a healthy realism about himself. Often the object of undue adulation and praise, he needs to beware of the temptations to pride. Just because he has responded to a holy calling does not certify him as a saint. He must know deep within his heart that he can never measure up to the somewhat romantic image his people have of him. Praise is a heady wine, and the well-received preacher may drink too deeply of it. It is so easy to mistake rhetorical talent for spiritual virtue. It is gratifying to look down upon a congregation and feel them eating from your hand. In such a moment of satisfaction it is difficult to distinguish between cleverness of speech and profundity of content. Truly the head of many a preacher has been "turned" by what the congregation might applaud as success.

In an expansive mood a man may say, "I just love to preach!" Certainly no one can complain of a man's love for his work, but this is an exultation which ought to be subjected to the most searching self-criticism. Does he love to preach because he loves God or because he loves the sound of his own voice? Does the power of God flow through his preaching, sometimes bringing him agony of soul, or does he love the power over people that preaching gives? Though the freest of all professions, the ministry by its very nature is also perilously mined with a thousand appealing decoys. The minister exercises his great freedom only as he calls upon the grace of God to enable him to detect and avoid the seductions which lie deceivingly on the surfaces over which he must daily move. His need for grace must be deeply and desperately felt. He must join Paul in saying: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:5-6a).

Where will the preacher find this grace? How will it be given to him? The source of grace, and hence of freedom, is identified in the insight of Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). The preacher is transformed by the power of grace and delivered into freedom when he seeks first in his life to entertain the Spirit of the Lord. Freedom is preserved, not because he is good or wise or eloquent but because the Spirit working in him wages victorious warfare against the ravages of deceit and decay.

George A. Gordon has helped us to understand the content of this grace by relating the question of freedom to the question of good. He wrote:

> Experience teaches man what appears to be good and is not, and what is real, essential, changeless good. The will of man guided by the natural good comes under its sovereignty; and here it must be said that apart from good freedom has no meaning. To be forever under the sway of the greatest good is to be perfect in freedom. The will, good, real and unreal, and freedom belong together; they constitute the field in which our moral life grows."[2]

The Christian, of course, finds this sovereign good in the person of Christ. Life in Christ constitutes "the field in which our moral life grows." Where does the Christian preacher obtain grace? Indeed he will find it alone in Jesus Christ. Gordon also declared that "The Christian pulpit is the creation of Christ, and its power will last only so long as his spirit controls and inspires it."[3] Moreover, he suggests that "As a preliminary in the discussion of the place of Christ in the pulpit of today, it must be remarked that preachers need to revive the sense of the supremacy of their calling by living more completely under the shadow of the Divine Preacher." It seems clear to me that we preachers will never revive the sense of the supremacy of our calling until we learn to derive the fulfillment of our two greatest needs — freedom and grace — from him who is full of grace and truth. He must perceive with the author of Ephesians, "Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of his power" (3:7).

This "Too slender, too tender, too fragile" preacher, in the words of Franklin D. Elmer, Jr., experiences an existential moment when he takes his place in the pulpit. On his human side, and understanding the nature of the gospel he is about to proclaim, he knows that he stands absolutely alone. Trembling in every limb he knows that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hence he implores Almighty God for grace. Then, if he truly preaches, a divine metamorphosis occurs. What he has prepared by the sweat of his brow, becomes something other than his own. His words bear the awful weight of the word of God. Now he knows what Paul meant when he said: *"For necessity is laid upon me.* Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" And still from across the centuries come the words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Since that truth is really Jesus Christ, the preacher knows what makes and keeps his pulpit free.

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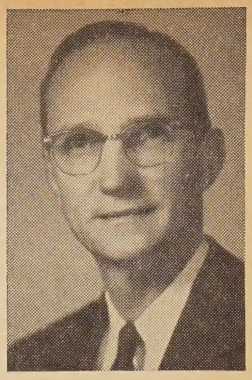
[2] *My Education and Religion*, p. 243.
[3] *The Christ of Today*, p. 251.



A Peculiar People

By William B. Ward

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself . . . Deuteronomy 14:2.

. . . Our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people. . . . Titus 2:14.

AGAIN and again in the King James Version of the Bible we read that God wants us to be his "peculiar people." But about the last thing any of us wants is to be called "peculiar." The problem here is in part a change in the meaning of the words used, but there is also a problem far deeper, a basic contradiction in the deepest desires of our daily lives. The daily tension of many of us is that we want to be God's people, but we also want to conform to other standards of our culture and to be accepted into a pattern of society which in many respects is sub-Christian.

Let us look more closely at the scripture passages. In addition to the verse quoted above from Deuteronomy we could add other Old Testament quotations, such as this one from Deuteronomy 26:18: "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people . . . that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." We might add to the words quoted from Titus other New Testament passages, such as this one from 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." You will notice each of these texts says we are to be called "a peculiar people." But we do not want to be "peculiar." We are thinking of some "square" or "creep," as the teenagers call him, standing out like a sore thumb, with a long black scowl on his face, and a black Bible under his arm, making himself and everyone else miserable. We do not want to be "peculiar."

We are not supposed to be. The meaning of the word used in the King James Version has changed. In seventeenth century English "peculiar" meant "one's own." That is exactly what the Bible means in these verses, "God's own people." The Greek word of the New Testament means "one's private property," used here for "a people selected by God for his own possession." It is so translated in the Revised Standard Version, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." The word is often used with the connotation of treasure — a people treasured up as God's own precious possession.

Because we are God's own people, we are different from others in the world. As the sentence from Deuteronomy put it, "we are a holy people unto the Lord." The Revised Standard translation of the verse in Titus reads, ". . . our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own." We are supposed to be different from others about us. "They are not of the world," said Jesus in his great prayer, "even as I am not of the world." The "world" in the Gospel of John means the sub-Christian standards of life about us. James wrote, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." We read in 2 Corinthians 6:17, " 'Come out from them and be separate from them,' says the Lord." The New Testament word for church is "ecclesia," meaning, literally, "those who are called out."

Here is where we are caught in our modern dilemma. We do not want to be different from the society in which we live. Life today puts an unusual premium on conformity. Sociologists have called the typical character of our age "other-directed," because his conduct is largely determined by the approval of others. We are scared to death someone will call us a religious fanatic. It is all right to be called a baseball "fan," or a golf "fan," or a bridge "fan" ("fan" is just a contraction of

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"fanatic"). But we are afraid someone will say behind our back, "He is peculiar! He is 'hipped' on the subject of religion. Now I've always said religion is a fine thing if you do not take it too far!" We are afraid that if we get *too* religious the crowd whose approval we want so desperately will think of us as peculiar, different.

So we work out a compromise which is commonly accepted by the "best" people — unofficially accepted by the church, in fact. We will be somewhat religious, but of course will not go too far. We will come to church on Sunday morning, but of course we would not think of talking to someone in our group about his soul, or of asking him to accept Christ as his Lord. That isn't done in our crowd. They would just think us queer. When we go out with the crowd we will join in some things which we know are not fully consistent with our Christian witness. Of course we would not commit a crime like murder or robbery, but we will let down the bars a little as the price of staying with the crowd. Thus we attempt to enjoy both Christ and "worldliness."

Then, if we look squarely down in the bottom of our hearts, we are saying to ourselves, "Now I'm playing it smart! I'm getting all the advantages of being a church member and all the fun of letting down the bars with the other crowd. I pity just a little those peculiar people who are too religious; they are missing real life! But everybody calls me a good fellow. They shake hands with me at church and they slap me on the back at the club. I have achieved my goal in life; I am just like everybody else in my crowd!"

"You are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession." " . . . our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own." "Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Let us face the plain teaching of the Bible. If we are God's own people, we are supposed to be different. Dorothy Sayers used to say that the first deadly sin of British church people is respectability. There is a strange fact about American church life we might well ponder. People today are being alienated from the church, not by the fact that it demands so much, but by the fact that it demands so little. People are not being offended by us church members because we are "peculiar"; they are being unimpressed by us because we are just like everybody else. Nietzsche, who probably did as much to lead the modern world toward paganism as anyone else, said to the church people of his day, "You must show me you are redeemed, before I will believe in your Redeemer."

People reacted strongly to those early Christians in New Testament days. Some were for them and some passionately against them. They were called all kinds of things, such as "turners of the world upside down." But one thing nobody ever said about them was that they were just like everybody else. Today there is hardly one unique feature which can be predicated of the practical life of the average member of the American church.

Now we are not to develop strange and peculiar practices just to stand out as eccentrics in the crowd. But there are some ways in which we have to dare to be different — or cease to be Christian. There come times when we have to take a stand in the crowd and say, "This thing I will not do, because I bear the name Christian." Sometimes in business we have to pay the cost of saying "no" because we are God's own people. One business man said, "I reached the place where I had to lose either my shirt or my soul." When we are with other men at a convention and everybody in the crowd is doing questionable things, we have to take a stand that dares to be different. You young people probably face the strongest pressure to conform of any group in America. There come times when you have to show you can "take it" and stand against all the pressures of the crowd for what you know is right and true. We soon learn, even in twentieth century America, that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

This should be said here: People admire us more, even if they will not admit it, if we stand true to our convictions. All of us feel contempt for the person with no more backbone than just to follow the crowd. There is a secret admiration for the young person who dares to stand up for his beliefs.

Basically, we Christians are different, not because of what we do not do. Christianity is fundamentally a positive religion. We are different from the crowd because of what we do and are. The Christian faith is more than a "thou shalt not" sign erected in front of sin. We are different because we are experiencing a new vibrant quality which Jesus called abundant life.

We are different because we have a better time than the crowd about us. The sun shines from a bluer sky and the birds sing more sweetly when we know that this is our Father's world. The simple joys of family and work and play are more satisfying when they are sanctified in the life of Christ. Sin is basically dull, disillusioning and unhealthy. Those pathetic church members looking longingly over the fence of sin, drooling over the tawdry pleasures of iniquity, have missed the whole point of the gospel. A Christian enjoys life more than others about him. Dwight Moody could walk down the streets of his city, thinking of what the Lord meant to him, and become so happy that as he walked one foot seemed to shout "Glory to God" and the other to answer "Hallelujah."

Most people are worried sick over what is going

to happen in the world. They called St. Francis a fool because he refused to worry himself with what everybody else was worried about. The Christian does not know what is going to happen in the world; but he knows the God who knows what will happen, the Father who has the whole world in his hands. "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" Do you really believe such promises as those? If you do, you are bound to be different from others who have no such relation with God.

We can sum up our message today in one verse from the New Testament: "And be ye not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . . " (Romans 12:2). We are not to let the power of environment mold us. We are not in the world to be integrated to our environment, but to change our environment into the likeness of the Kingdom of God. We are to be "transformed." This word is the same one used for the transfiguration of our Lord himself. When he was on the mountaintop that day the disciples looked and saw the veil of human flesh swept aside, revealing all the glorious radiance of the eternal Son of God. He was "transfigured" before them.

And we are to be "transfigured," made different, made into his likeness, by "our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own." "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession."

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

THE other day a friend of mine took his small son to lunch at a cafeteria. He was not paying much attention and found the little rascal had passed everything but the desserts, of which he had taken five. Once on the tray, there was no way to get them back on the counter without a terrific row. My friend tries to be a modern parent and he was quite upset at what this experience does to the theory that children ought to make their own decisions.

I began to think about this in education. My schooling began at about the time the curriculum was supposed to be a kind of cafeteria line where the students made their own selections. I took Spanish instead of Latin because somebody told me it was easier. It has handicapped me all my life to have no basic knowledge of Latin constructions.

We are still in the clutches of "nondirective" counseling and relationships. It is supposed to be a crime to make a suggestion or try to influence anybody. The preacher as a counselor must not let his convictions show. But Chesterton said he did not want to be influenced; he wanted to be commanded. I feel the same way. Whenever a fellow starts to be "nondirective" with me, I get away from him just as fast as I can.

Of course this spirit of the age has entered religion. There are church programs that offer everything from dancing lessons to flower arrangement. The theory seems to be that the church exists to furnish everything that people think they might like to try. There is plenty of activity, all right, but when these Christians get into real trouble, they are no better equipped to deal with it than a faithful Rotarian. The cafeteria-church panders to the unbalanced desires of man's immaturity.

Look at the pulpit! Here are men giving the people what they want. They trim their sails to fit the wind and their pious mouthings give about as much strengthening to the spiritual muscles as cream puffs. The babes of the gospel prefer milk, so give them milk. The solid food which Paul speaks of to the Corinthians will never be digested by our spiritual weaklings. For we are content to let them remain babes. There are church members who have been eating pious dessert for years and the only reason they are not dead from indigestion is that they go to church about once a month.

Dear brethren, scare them and shock them next Sunday morning with a THUS SAITH THE LORD. Tell them that Christ came not to give men what they want, but what they need. No more cafeteria lines, but the King's Banquet! No more unbalanced, sickly, secularized meals! Lord send us some spiritual dieticians with both grace and courage.

The Cross Is Not Deductible

By Warren Carr

Philippians 2:1-11.

A LIST of deductibles has become commonplace to us religious people. It is a safe wager that it gets more attention than our prayer list. The most familiar pattern in this regard is the giving of money to church and charity in the light of tax exemptions. While it is quite common, this may not be the most serious practice of its kind.

Our total contributions to society appear to be cut from this pattern. The rich man explains his gift to the church with the words, "I would have had to give it to Uncle Sam for taxes." One who performs a seeming kindness brushes aside the endeavors of gratitude by saying, "Forget it, I enjoyed doing it." One would think that we have assumed a frivolous attitude toward the good that we do. We turn aside expressions of gratitude by making it clear that what we have done was not a sacrifice. What appears to be frivolous is not. Most of us are too honest to want thanks for a compassion which costs us nothing.

There is something that we want for our good works. They are not given as freely as one might suppose. In the place of gratitude we had rather have credit. That is, we want a deduction from our total obligation to the Ruler of history.

This tempered goodness in the modern mood of charity is the farthest thing from the cross of our Lord!

This may be the reason that the cross, both as event and doctrine, constitutes an affront to modern man. That it does offend him seems hardly worth an argument. Ever since our Lord died upon his cross, we have attempted to remove it from our relationship with God.

The endeavor to eliminate the cross from our religious experience has two characteristics. First of all, we interpret the cross as a transaction between God and Christ. Our involvement, if any, is secondary. Man would earn his salvation by his good works; if he is given proper credit for this, he does not need the cross by which he is reconciled to God. The cross of Christ belongs to a preconceived plan in a contract between God and the Son. The cross is explained in terms of our Lord's vocation. This doctrine came to fullest flower by the cultivation of Albrecht Ritschl. At the turn of the century, he was insisting that the cross was something which Christ had to do in order to be true to the Father and to himself. It is true that love, as manifest on the cross, is grounded in the nature of God. But this should not allow us to suggest that man's need of reconciliation was not involved at Calvary. Christ was being something other than simply a proper son of a father of love. Man's spiritual impoverishment is fact and not fancy. The cross is in answer to man's need and not merely a contract between God the Father and God the Son.

The second characteristic of the doctrinal enterprise to negate the cross is to convince ourselves that it did not cost very much. As a consequence, two formidable heresies of history are still alive: one would make Christ so completely divine that the cross involves no real suffering as man understands and experiences suffering, the other is to make Christ so completely human that his death meant no more to God than would the death of any good man.

Contemporary man has set about to blend the above ideas so as to make them more amenable to his life and thought. The cross was in the will of God. It was a necessity for Christ because of this. To the extent that man was involved, the death of Christ was not very costly to God or to himself. Jesus was either so divine that he did not suffer or so human that God was not involved in any specific way. Man is not obligated to Christ and need not be grateful because Christ had to give himself to fulfill his contract with God. Whatever the cross may mean to man need not obligate him. Christ can count this as a deductible from God.

With such a view of the cross, it is strange that man still thinks of Christianity as a religion of

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forgiveness. Upon admitting his need of forgiveness, he proceeds to do some curious things with the whole idea. Ask the average churchman for the scripture which best reveals the forgiveness of God and he will probably tell you the parable of the prodigal son. This would be in keeping with our accent upon a forgiveness that is free and unconditional. We are enraptured with that moving story of a father waiting eagerly for the return of his wayward son. As such it prominently expresses the freedom of forgiveness without saying anything about the cost. The parable ends with a gay party at which the "fatted calf" is the one who pays the price. Two Englishmen, Denny of the past and Baillie of the present, make the point that there is no cross in the story of the prodigal son because there is no Christ. This is not to detract from its beauty and poignant truth. It is to claim that we must go elsewhere if we are to find parables of forgiveness in which the cost is brought into focus. Jesus also told parables of the "good shepherd" who would lay down his life for his sheep. Each emphasis is needed. Christ does not have to give his life: no one takes it from him, he lays it down of his own accord. But one who lays down his life forgives at supreme cost — that is, the cost of his own life. It is to this cost that we now give our attention.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." So sublime and poetic are these words and those that follow as to cause some scholars to question the authenticity of Paul's authorship for this passage. To suppose that Paul, because of the beauty of its truth, was lifted above the level of his normal style is not an unreasonable explanation. It would be difficult to express this truth in prosaic tones. The idea was introduced with a warning against selfishness and pride. Then it describes the humble self-giving of Christ which ends with his obedience by death on the cross.

The mention of obedience does not mean that this was what Christ had to do. Being in the form of God, Christ did not snatch at equality. Alan Richardson believes that Paul is drawing an inference between Christ and Adam. Adam was in the image of God. He did grasp at equality. He tried to rob God of his sovereignty by theft and evasion. Because he was a creature of God, Adam had no right to this. Christ, who was in the beginning with God, did have a right to such equality. Instead he emptied himself. The cost of the cross is beginning to be apparent.

In the Roman and Corinthian letters, Paul elaborates on this theme. "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The encounter between the robber, Adam, and God had something to do with man. So did the encounter between Christ and God at the cross have something to do with man. In the first instance, this meant death. In the second, life in the resurrection.

This Savior, lest we forget, emptied himself and was born in the likeness of men. He took the form of a slave and gave himself up to death on the cross. Can one really believe that this cost our Lord nothing? This was more than a check drawn from a marginal account set aside for charity. This was not out of his abundance. It was not something which he could easily afford. It was his very life. He poured out his glory, stripped himself of kingly robes for the garb of a peasant, and died between criminals. Little wonder that he took special note in former days of the widow who gave her two copper coins. He explained, "They gave out of their abundance. She gave all that she had."

If this confronts us with some terrible sense of obligation, a starting point has been made. Repentance and not obligation is the ultimate response we need. It must represent to us what it really is. It is more than sorrow that we could have been so foolish, remorse that we have been caught in the light of judgment, or amazement that we could have been so wrong. The repentant man realizes what he has done to the God of Christ. He understands that he is a causal factor in the self-emptying, self-giving ignominy, and death of his Lord. He knows that because something is radically wrong with him Christ took the radical action of the cross.

Each one of us, who would become a new person, must experience repentance like this. If it happens to you, what will you hasten to do because of it? Will you take quick action to rid yourself of the obligation incurred? For the first time having realized the cost of the cross, will you want to hurry to pay your debt? I hope this does run through your mind. Then there is a greater truth to be shared. We cannot understand it without this prior sense of obligation. Imagine how one really feels when he realizes that even the obligation is pardoned. Reconciliation between the Father and his children is not a matter of the exchange of obligations.

We are caught in this last dilemma. We cannot go our way as though the cross does not obligate us. We are debtors to Christ the Savior. Yet the relationship between God and man is not that of creditor to debtor. It cannot be. His forgiveness is free. At the cost of the Son it is nonetheless a free gift of God.

History is replete with the tragedies of men who could not believe this. Among our most persistent doubts is that of affirming the grace of God.

Our highly competitive society does little to help us in this respect. That anyone receives more than he puts into the world's "pressure cooker" is incomprehensible. Christ must have encountered this skepticism in his own day. It was met with the skillful insight characteristic in his teaching. On one occasion he told a story of one friend going to another, in the dead of night, to borrow some bread. An unexpected guest in the home of the first man had initiated the emergency. With wry candor, Jesus suggested that the bread would be forthcoming, not on the basis of friendship but because the man wanted to get the bother over and go back to sleep. The picture of importunity says more about understanding God's grace than we first suspect. God is certainly more than a sleepy friend who will help us so that he will not be bothered. But man is to pray with the fervor of one to whom grace is the unexpected. Prayer sometimes is storming the door of heaven and shouting against the din of competing voices only to find that the door is unlocked. Then we discover that the unsearchable riches of Christ cannot be stolen because they are ours for the asking. Against this background of man's importuning and his fellow man's response, Jesus draws the clinching argument. "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" Here is cause for astonishment. There are times when we do that which is right and give what is good. If we, being evil, can know how to be good and charitable, how much more is to be expected from the Father.

What is the response that we are to make? If, though we are obligated, we cannot relate to God in payment, how can we respond? The only answer is perfect love. It is impossible to pay back what is given. But God will accept our love. I wish for some foolproof human analogy by which to illustrate this truth. There seems to be none. I can remember some occasions which come very close. Have you ever received a great kindness to which there was no apparent return? Then the only option left for you was that of love. This is the position in which Christ has placed us. This is what he has done to us. We can and must love him.

It is not a love that we owe. It is simply the only way that we can respond.

Man on Review Before the Christ He Rejects

The Palm Sunday Mirror

By Theodore P. Ferris

WHEN Jesus rode into Jerusalem the Sunday before he died, no one knew he was coming. No one had invited him. Neither the governor nor the high priest was on hand to welcome him. The people had no time to prepare either themselves or the city for his arrival. Some of the pilgrims who were in town for the festival improvised a reception; they cut down branches from the trees to wave as he passed by, and some of them put their garments on the donkey that he rode and even spread them in the way as they would for a king. But the city as a whole was taken completely by surprise. Suddenly, unannounced, uninvited, he appeared. There he was!

Things often happen that way. You are lost, either literally or figuratively. Frantically, you try to find your way out. You try this door and that door, this person and that person, this doctor and that doctor, this religion and that religion, all to no avail. Suddenly, where you least expect it, when you are ready to give up, a door opens of its own accord. There is the way out. You are in the clear. You have been found.

Or, you are looking for a mate. As you crave

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The New Life, *a book of sermons by Dr. Ferris, published by Seabury Press, has been chosen the Seabury Book for Lent 1961.*

food, you crave companionship, and not only the casual companionship of friends that come and go, but the life-long companionship of a mate. You begin to look for the perfect person; you make dates, you go to parties, you join clubs. Suddenly, when you are not looking, when you are not thinking about it, someone appears. There he is. He is the one!

Life works in a strange, mysterious way, doesn't it? For on the one hand, it says to you: If you want me, you have to look for me, work for me, search for me, find me for yourself. But then, when it comes to the great things in life — at least, it seems so to me, and it is confirmed more and more in my experience — life says to you: Here I am! An opportunity drops in your lap, unbidden, unexpected; there it is! You did not seek it; it singled you out, so to speak. A book is left on a bedside table in a room where you are spending the night. You read it and, as you read, it is as though a new planet swims into your ken. A person walks across your path and changes the whole direction of your life. A vision flashes across your horizon and the entire world is different from that moment on.

That is the way it happened then. The people were looking for a king, a real king; a king with authority, with power, who could lead them out of the morass, both political and spiritual, in which they were caught. They looked everywhere. They searched the scriptures for generations to see where he might be born, and when. They combed the ranks of the royal family, defunct though it was, to see if there might be someone there who would fill this role. Some, believing that this could be no earthly figure, scanned the sky for some heavenly being who would come to be their king. And when they couldn't find him, they prayed to God and asked him to send him to them.

Then, one day when they weren't looking, when they weren't thinking about it, in the streets of Jerusalem, on the steps of the temple, there stood a king! Nothing like any king they had ever seen or heard of before, or ever dreamed about; he had none of the things that they associated with royalty, but there was something kingly about him, nevertheless, and even the most insensitive of them were aware of it, and knew instinctively that he had the right to rule. There he stood, without notice, without warning; young, plain, yet imperious. They had done nothing to bring him there, he simply had come.

He made no attempt to force himself upon them, no attempt whatever to take the city by storm. There was nothing that resembled in any way a coup d'état, nothing like the great conquerors of the past who rode into a city and took it by force. Nothing like that at all. With Alexander, Napoleon, and Hitler, Jesus had absolutely nothing in common. Nothing! He was the king of a kingdom as different from theirs as day is from night. There he was, and they were absolutely free to accept him or to reject him.

That, too, is the way things happen. Life allows us an amazingly large margin of freedom, and the great things, when you stop to think about it, life seldom forces upon anyone. They are presented, but they do not have to be taken in. Bach made music, for instance, music such as nobody had ever heard. People were free to listen to it or not to listen to it. Some listened to it, many did not. Consequently, it lay buried for a hundred years. In the next century Abraham Lincoln made music of another kind, the music of words — eloquence such as no other American has ever equaled, words in which great ideas that went deep into the nature of truth and reality were expressed with such vividness and beauty that the words of no other American can be compared to them. Yet the people were not compelled to listen to him. They were free to listen or not, as they chose. Some chose not to listen. Thank God, many did listen, and what they heard they never forgot.

An opportunity may now stand at your door. You are absolutely free to open the door or to leave it closed. You can accept it, you can rise to its challenge, you can take the risks of it and plunge into the depths of it, or you can stay locked up in your little house, sealed in your private shell, all safe and sound by yourself. You have the freedom to do either.

Some things in life we have no choice about. We have talked about those things on many another occasion. But when it comes to the great things — it is always dangerous, as I have said so many times before, to make such generalizations, but I am sure this one is true — when it comes to the great things, we can take them or leave them. We can open the door or leave it closed. When Christ stands before you in any shape or form, in a beggar, in a neighbor, in an enemy, in a friend, in a lover, in a decision, in a choice, in a challenge, you are absolutely free to take him or leave him. There is no compulsion one way or the other.

The choice the people had to make about Jesus on that first Palm Sunday was not an easy one. Is it ever, do you think? On the one hand, there was something in them that responded to him, deeply, sincerely. He had done so much for them; he had opened the eyes of their blind, he had healed their sick, he had cured their mentally disturbed. He had unlocked the heavens for so many of them and shown them things they had never dreamed of, stars they had never seen before. They knew that. And there were so many things about him that appealed to them, things that answered some of the deepest needs of the human soul. They knew that, too. And in most cases, in their secret hearts, they knew that he spoke the truth as the truth had never before been so clearly and so unambiguously spoken.

But, if they accepted him, they would surely get in trouble with Rome. They were in trouble enough already; they had high taxes to pay and the armies of occupation were tramping through their country day and night. It wasn't easy to be under the heel of even so enlightened an empire as Rome. If they accepted this man as their real king, they would certainly get in even more trouble with Rome than they were in already. They would be guilty of treason. On the purely local scene, some of them would surely lose their jobs, especially if they worked in the temple, and there were hundreds employed in the performance of the sacrificial cult. And all of them would have to change their ways of life, some of them very radically. They were the victims, you see, of what we have come now — thanks to the psychiatrists — to know as ambivalence, which is the co-existence of opposite and conflicting feelings about the same person or object. They wanted him, and they didn't want him. They were drawn to him, and they were repelled by him.

There were some people, of course, who were totally drawn and others totally repelled, but as a people there was a real, deep-seated ambivalence, and their divided heart was never so vividly or so dramatically exposed as it was on Palm Sunday, when their first impulse was to accept him with open arms and to hail him as their king and deliverer, but when they stopped to think about it, they withdrew; they changed their tune. They began to rationalize, and along these lines: it is better that one man should die, even though he be the best man that ever lived, than that everybody should get into trouble. That is good rationalization, isn't it? It is good enough for the twentieth century. It makes sense. So they rejected him. They returned him like a manuscript to its author, with a rejection slip on which were three words: *Good, but dangerous!*

The point is, of course, that the same ambivalence is in all of us in one way or another, and this is why we come back again year after year to these mighty events; not because we are compelled to, but because we are drawn to them, because in the drama of this one Life the issues of every life are set forth. We find ourselves right square in the middle of it (that is, if we have the eyes to see) and we find in ourselves the same conflict of feelings that the people then had. For us it is something like this: we accept something good in principle, but when it stands before us incarnate in a person, then we begin to wonder, we begin to count the cost, to add up all the "ifs, ands, and buts," to see the implications, to get frightened and, more than once, reject it.

To make this specific — and there is no point in saying it unless it is specific, is there? — you accept the principle of racial integration. I would be willing to guess that there is not a person in this congregation who does not accept in principle the principle that all men are created equal and that, no matter what their color or race may be, they should be treated alike, without discrimination. But you want to sell your house, and the first offer comes from a Negro. There the principle stands before you incarnate in a person and you begin to wonder; you add up all the factors in the situation; you begin to rationalize and is it not altogether likely that you will end up by saying, it is better that one good family suffer than that this whole neighborhood be ruined? You might not say that, but the chances are that even the best of you would.

Again, you accept the principle of disarmament. I imagine that there are not many people, perhaps some in this case, but not many, who would not say that on principle they believe that the nations of the world should put down their arms, for their arms will ultimately destroy the world and all the human beings in it. Then someone presents a plan for disarmament; the plan has risks, and there are questions about it that you cannot answer. And when the principle becomes incarnate in a specific plan, then you begin to wonder, to get cold feet. You begin to think of the safety of the nation and, mind you, we all do this — I do it — and you rationalize, only you put it the other way around this time, even in a more horrible way. You say, it is better that the whole world blow up than that this one nation lose its security. (Not altogether logical, but emotionally satisfying!)

Or, you accept the principle of religious freedom. I hope you do, and I think you do, the right of every man and woman to worship according to his conscience; and you, in your tradition and culture, respect the religion of other people, and their beliefs. Then a man who belongs to a church that you fear is nominated for a high office. The principle is then incarnate in a person and demands action on your part, a decision, a vote; but you begin to tremble, and to ask questions, and to wonder whether it is right, and what would happen if so-and-so should be elected, whether perhaps it is not better for one person, or one church to suffer than that the whole nation be exposed to danger.

We could go on like this indefinitely, but we will not! One more example of the ambivalence you are likely to find in yourself will be enough. You accept the principle of Christian marriage. I would be willing to say that there is not one human being in this congregation — certainly not many — who does not accept the principle of Christian marriage — a man and a woman living together in lifelong union with each other, in order to fulfill the life of each partner of the union and to provide the maximum degree of security and happiness for their children. But when an unpleasant or difficult husband or wife faces you every morning at the

breakfast table, when that principle becomes incarnate in a person, stares at you in a real situation, then you begin to change your mind, to back down, to rationalize. And you often come to the point where you reject the principle altogether.

This ambivalence that was so vividly dramatized on Palm Sunday many years ago, and that is so much a part of our lives as we live them now, is not, to my way of thinking, so much because we are bedeviled as it is because we are bewildered. Not many people go out deliberately to kill the Prince of Life, not many people deliberately set out to reject the good when it stands before them. They do it because they are caught in the trap of their own conflicts, their own desires for security, their fears and timidities, and when these begin to work against their ideals, their finest insights, their deepest longings, they are more than likely to give up. And the Prince of Glory pays the price, always. The best we have suffers the most. The highest we know is dragged down to the lowest to which we can sink.

I have never felt so vividly as I do this year what it meant when the prophet said, as though by anticipation, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." I am not sure that the Lord did it, but I am sure that the iniquity which is the tragic result of our ambivalence inevitably falls on the innocent and good.

The Palm Sunday story ends here, but this sermon cannot end here, not quite. Jesus was finally rejected, but the rejection was not final. That is the amazing paradox, and the gospel is a grand series of paradoxes, one after another. The manuscript that the publisher rejects often becomes the book that the whole world accepts. That is the paradox. And the very rejection may have something to do with the power that wins the final approval. That is the mystery.

Rembrandt was the most popular painter of his day until he was about thirty-five. He had the whole of Holland, virtually the whole of Europe, applauding him, clamoring for his work. He painted everybody of any distinction at all and could command any price he wished. Then, when he was about thirty-five, another painter came along — VanDyke, more elegant than Rembrandt, easier for the general public to grasp and understand, and Rembrandt was rejected in favor of his more elegant successor. Ten years before his death, he was forced to sell everything that he had, and he lived the last years of his life in poverty. "And yet," writes an art critic, "most of his finest painting belongs to those difficult years." He was finally rejected, but the rejection was not final; and, somehow or other, you cannot help but feel that the rejection had something to do with the greatness that followed; that the rejection, as it were, pierced him and struck open a new vein so that the genius was greater than ever.

This is not the time to spell out this side of the truth, we shall do that at greater length as the week goes on and, of course, most fully on Good Friday and Easter. Now we say only this: we are ambivalent creatures at best. We see it so clearly on a day like this, when we look at ourselves in the Palm Sunday mirror. We often reject those we love the most, and love and hate are so closely interwoven in our hearts that it is sometimes almost impossible to disentangle them. But God has a way of taking our rejections and turning them into life. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ MY GRAND point in preaching is to break the hard heart, and to heal the broken one. — *John Newton*

✚ MY FATHER gave me a healthy stomach, my mother dedicated me to foreign missions; but God had mercy upon the heathen and sent me to the Christians in Brooklyn. — *Henry Ward Beecher* on his 70th birthday

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✚ DON'T become the pet lamb of your flock; be their shepherd. — *James Denney*

✚ THERE is a spiritual chloroform, and it has long been known — always the same — love. The soul is such a sensitive creature that an operation performed on it without the chloroform of love is never anything but injurious. — *Leo Tolstoy* in his diary.

✚ GOD, that all-powerful Creator of nature and architect of the world, has impressed man with no character so proper to distinguish him from other animals, as by the faculty of speech. — *Quintilian*

✚ MORGAN Phelps Noyes said that a postscript written by Alexander Whyte might well be in every pastor's study:

"Truth often separates:
Love always unites.
'Love me,' says Augustine, 'and then say anything to me and about me you like.' "

✚ NO, IT IS not hard to preach, but it is very hard to bring oneself to the mood where one is fit to preach. — *Henry van Dyke*

Nought for Your Shame

By Markus Barth

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Romans 1:16-17

IT is good that Paul was not ashamed to bring the gospel into the world's capital. Had he been too much impressed by the profits to be made in Rome's trading center, by the actions on the slave market, by the machinations that led to advice and consent of the senate and to administrative decisions of the imperial government he might have accommodated his message to one standard or another. But he did not! "I am not ashamed of the gospel." This sounds rather strong and almost heroic — perhaps even stubborn! From what we know of Paul, he was certainly not what we would call a heroic personality; he had neither an impressive athletic appearance nor a photogenic profile. His would not be a suitable figure for a statue in a park, nor for a fine bronze bust to be placed in a university's hall of honor. But one thing he had even if his figure was ugly and his looks were poor: he trusted that the gospel was a power greater than the roar of lions in the arena, than the yells of people asking for bread and circus, than the stomp of victorious legions marching on Rome's paved, gala streets, than the incantations of priests and the initiations of religious clubs. If Paul had not written and come to Rome, we might not know of Jesus Christ, of a righteousness better than Esra's and Aristotle's and of the power of the gospel which proved greater than that of Rome and its empire. Thanks be to God that Paul was not ashamed!

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But now a murmur and whisper are heard in the Western Hemisphere — not among so-called worldly people only, but even stronger within Christian churches and even within our own hearts. Is it not true, as some philosophers, poets, and other deep thinkers are telling us, that God is dead? That God of whose power and life, of whose righteousness and love Isaiah and Paul and others spoke — most likely he is no more! And what is left but a couple of lone, lorn, lowly people who wait for some kind of substitute God. His name cannot be God anymore. So he is called Godot. For this little ersatz deity people wait and wait and wait and wait. And nothing happens; for he is not coming and he will not come!

And further, the whisper says that most likely not only the time of God but also of the gospel is over. For we have learned not only to discern spirits but also the means of communication and the very languages of man. There is a language that makes sense: it is descriptive, scientific and its subject matter and logical structure are verifiable. And there is a mode of talk used among children, primitives, theologians and other aboriginal and uncontrollable emotionalists. This language is not verifiable — but it is the language of the gospel and of religion. How should things spoken of in that language have a right, how should they possess the power to impress the people of a scientific age? We know of biological, physical, cultural, religious evolution! What we need, so the murmur suggests, is knowledge of the laws of nature, psyche and society — not a gospel. For gospel means forgiveness, love, surprise, freedom. We, however, have learned that man is not free; rather he is an exponent of the powers of cosmos and chaos that rule the universe. What good comes from the soft talk about forgiveness and grace? Let us sin that grace increase! Forgive a man and he will misuse forgiveness and exploit you! This alone promises success: give him a fixed *Welt-anschauung* and make him know the laws — then you can keep under control both masses and individuals. But stop that talk of "gospel"!

Finally, the mutterer is heard to say, especially in theological seminaries and preachers' colleges, that perhaps the time of preaching has passed and is over. For it has proved powerless, bankrupt, tepid, stagnant like brackish water rippled on its surface, or like a leaf that trembles in the wind. Instead, it is being suggested that religious people had better shut their mouths and convene in silent meetings; that sermons should be replaced by movies; that religious experience is better produced by campfire atmospheres than under pulpits as elaborate and ornate as the one on which I am standing; that the psychotherapist's couch is the best place to get to know oneself; or that the figures of statistics disclose the ultimate truth of things!

However the arguments against God, the gospel and preaching run, their undertone is common and clear enough. This is their origin, key and conclusion: we are ashamed of the gospel, and we feel entitled to say, contrary to Paul, that it is *not* "the power of God for salvation."

To this rumor and murmur I have but one thing to say: it is a shame to be ashamed of the gospel! Let ignorance, stupidity and emptiness pretend to possess insight, wisdom and purpose! Actually, there is no reason to be ashamed of the gospel; it stands on stronger ground than the all-wise mumble.

"For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'He who is righteous through faith shall live.'" The power of that preaching in which Paul is engaged as a speaker, a writer and a personal witness, is not dependent upon his rhetoric, his personality, or his success. Rather he says that its mystery lies in the content of the gospel. Gospel is not just talk; it is disclosure and announcement of an event that has taken place. God held judgment when Jesus was crucified and raised. A trial took place that has to do with the death and life of all men. It is the judgment of God that has to be imparted to every man. Since it is God's and not Paul's or any one judge's verdict upon man, there is no reason for timidity or shame.

The decision which the gospel makes us know, is different from what in our world of trials and mistrials is called or experienced as righteousness or justice. It is different from defeats or Pyrrhic victories in which our contests and wars result. It is certainly different, too, from our crusades for whose promotion we misuse the name of God. The judgment act of God took place in this world and time. But it was and is God's righteousness of which the gospel speaks, and not a human or demonic concept of right and wrong.

Such is the righteousness of God: it is the concern for man which makes God send his son as servant into the midst of rebels. It is the obedience of that Son who lays down his life for enemies. It is the faithfulness of the Father who hears his child cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" and raises him from the dead. It is the election of weak, small Israel whose dignity and merits are no greater than any man's or people's, and it is God's fidelity to the covenant made with them — despite their murmur and rebellion. It is the equipment of men with a Spirit that makes them strong to be witnesses to others, though they are weak in themselves. It is, to use Paul's most provocative phrase, the justification of the sinner, that is, the forgiveness and love granted not only to those that are near God, but also to all those afar, to Jews and Gentiles, to *all* men! For it is, as Paul distinctly says, God's (and not man's) righteousness.

This righteousness has to do with faith. What is the meaning of this word "faith"? We misunderstand it most radically when we consider it an epistemological term that denotes a specific way of knowledge and is opposed to reason or to conduct of life. Actually, the biblical word "faith" describes an interpersonal relationship, the way in which two people live and communicate with each other. Faithfulness may be an adequate description of its essence. A man faithful to a friend, a married person faithful to his partner, a boss faithful to his employees does not measure the fellow man against a yardstick. He does not press him into a pattern or mold. But with his specific gifts he is available, ready and steadfast to let the other live, to acknowledge the other's position, to enjoy his company. Faith itself is not a concept that can be defined; it is an ever new event and discovery between the respective partners; it will vary according to the nature and character of the persons involved. It is a way of living together.

When, therefore, Paul speaks of "righteousness through faith" we should not presume that he wants to say: "God's righteousness is a paradox; you have to swallow it for better or worse; the best thing to do is to sacrifice your intellect and to jump into an abyss." It was the devil who suggested to Jesus such a jump from the temple's pinnacle; he was shrewd enough to offer a proof text from the Bible for his Kierkegaardian recommendation! He was still Satan; and Jesus declined. There is no reason to assume that Paul pretended to know better. The "righteousness from faith to faith" is not a somersault. Rather it is an event and communication that presupposes, discloses, enacts and stipulates a sensible, faithful, personal attitude and action from each person involved.

Faithfulness is, according to Paul, first of all God himself. Why does he stick to Israel? Why does he send and resurrect Jesus? Why does he give the Spirit so that the gospel is brought to the ends of the earth? Because God has faith in man! Indeed, it takes none less than God to have faith in man and to be faithful to that creature which is endowed with much higher gifts and talents than any other, and which so misuses them.

Further: faithful to God and man at the same time is Jesus Christ. Priests like Eli, kings like Saul, prophets like Hannanniah were found to be unfaithful to their tasks, and to rush those entrusted to them by God into misery. But God promised to create and to send a faithful servant. Samuel, David, Moses and Jeremiah are described as servants after God's own heart, as faithful ministers corresponding to God's faithfulness. Above all, Jesus Christ is called in the New Testament the faithful and righteous child of God. There would be no salvation for Jews and Gentiles had he not obeyed God in the worst trial ever staged.

Finally, Paul speaks of the faith to which Jews and Gentiles alike are created and called by the faithful God, through the appearance, the life and the work of the faithful Jesus Christ. Man's faith is life under the protection of God's faith in man. It depends upon the victory and ground acquired by Jesus Christ. Life in faith is led by such thoughts and words and deeds and sufferings that correspond to God and the Savior. I don't know why such faith should involve an intellectual sacrifice. Much more it is display of sober realism. Since we have such a God and such a servant as the gospel discloses, it is but natural and normal not to continue in doubt, fear, infidelity or rebellion. Against such a God we cannot stand. With this God we can stand all that wants to beat us down.

So the righteousness of God is a righteousness to live by. It does not have the abstract, blind, impersonal, enslaving, killing character of a system, a standard, or a sword. The revealed righteousness of God discloses faith and asks for faith. You rebellious, desolate, shaking creatures are not God-forsaken! You have a friend! God gives you a Magna Carta! You shall not vegetate and die in misery, but live in grace! "It is written, 'He who is righteous by faith shall live!' "

If we had first to believe in the existence of a god before we were informed who this deity is, what he does, and what becomes of us, such belief would be a thing very hard to find, to justify and to verify. Paul would not be interested in that belief and such a god. The God of whom he speaks reveals his being by disclosing who and what he is. Not in naked power or abstract otherness does he impose himself upon man, but by revealing his own righteousness and faithfulness. This God cannot be verified in laboratories or by computers. He verifies himself in action. The Jews are the proof he gives of his existence; for who can take notice of their history without admitting that the Lord their God is and acts unlike any other god? And God verifies himself by Jesus Christ; for in Christmas, Cross and Resurrection a nearness and humanity of God are disclosed that defy all myths and symbols of deities and souls descending and ascending. Finally, God verifies himself in the calling of the Gentiles; no other God dares to call not-my-people, to sacrifice the beloved son and servant for the sake of outsiders, and to make and declare holy precisely those unholy.

The gospel stands upon the ground that something has happened which is worth knowing. When Christ died and was raised, an event took place that is beyond comparison and has no equal.

But what good could the most dramatic and meaningful event be, unless it were known? What, if you were acquitted by a court *in absentia,* and nobody told you in your prison cell that you were released? What if the armistice and surrender of the German troops after World Wars I and II had not been announced on the streets of New York? What if doctors find out that after all you have no cancer, but they leave you in doubt and fear? And above all, what if he and she meet again and again but the words "I love you" are never spoken? Then we would be in a situation similar to that of man without the gospel!

There are events which must be made known or else they are neither complete nor of good to anyone. And there are words of announcement, information, disclosure that are not "but words." Rather, when words are related to events that concern us and change our whole outlook upon life, even our life itself, then they count. Then they are powerful words that carry the hidden event and decision to its goal and completion. They bring the event right down into time and place, consciousness and decision of man. Such words make something new of him. The relevant event behind the words makes the very words relevant events. The prisoner, after hearing of the acquittal, leaves his cell. The people of New York dance on the streets. The tired and hunted man in the grey flannel suit relaxes. And some people go and get a marriage license! "The power of God for salvation" which Paul sees operating in the words of the gospel he preaches is precisely such a power to make all things new in the hearer and his environment.

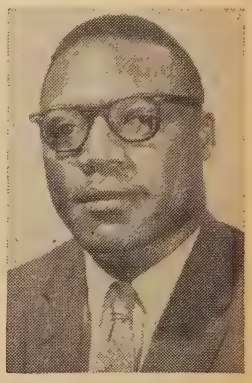
Woe to Paul if he did not tell what he knows of God's judgment act and of his righteousness! Accursed be he if he were ashamed to deliver his message or if he preferred, as Peter did once — to go fishing! He would be like a postman who failed to deliver love letters and checks entrusted to him. Such people we put into prison. But it is too easy to condemn others for the trifles of mistakes and perfidies they commit. We are the men, every Christian, and especially the ministers of the churches, who are given knowledge of what happened when God held judgment. There a deed was done which is not complete and has not reached its goal and fullness unless "all believe, the Jew first and also the Gentile." God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. Woe to us if we continued to be ashamed of God,

of the gospel and of preaching! We cannot have faith unless we, too, become witnesses to both the near and the far.

But one thing should be kept in mind. No church, no sermon, no theological thought can become more faithful to God and the gospel by simply moving the clock back and returning to a status quo ante. There is some noise made about the idea that we need a "new reformation." It is clear that under this cover each speaker and writer intends to promote his own concepts and his own concern.

Actually neither the life of the earliest churches nor of the allegedly unified medieval mankind, nor of the reformation or Pilgrim Fathers' period has been such that we should aim at restoring it. Restoration is in no form the salvation for church or world. When Paul speaks of the "power for salvation," he speaks of something before, and not behind, man. Unity of faith, courage and endurance in mission work, true witness before individuals and society cannot be found on any backward way. Much more, we are to encounter that unity, to find that courage, and to bear that witness solely by moving forward on the ground laid by God, learning from the insights of former generations. The time which is left may be short. But it is still a good time in which we live. For it is the time of the good news of salvation and of joy for all the people.

Integrity Is More the Result of Faith Than of Deliberative Action



Personal Integrity on Trial

By Charles E. Morton

Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. Luke 6:26

THE disclosure of "payola," rigged quiz programs involving persons of high public stature, the easy commercializing of morals, and the resort to deception as a matter of governmental policy, have led many a person to conclude that the few remaining bastions of personal integrity in the modern world are crumbling.

This apparent eclipse of personal integrity in the modern world is a matter of grave concern. Some observers of this abrasive process have offered causal explanations of the disintegration of personal integrity in terms of the impact of modern social forces upon man. Thus romanticists believe that the institutions of society are responsible for the disintegration of personal dignity. The Marxist revolt is based on belief that capitalism is an oppressive system which destroys personal integrity by transforming all human relationships into economic relationships. Existentialists are convinced that the threatening loss of individual integrity is due primarily to the depersonalizing forces of technical society.

America is not lacking in the production of books by authors describing the shift in this country from the individual ethics of colonial days to the new social ethics of a mass and organizational society in which conformity becomes the highest virtue.

Attempts to account for the disintegration of personal integrity in terms of the effects powerful social forces have upon the individual tend to hinder the discovery of a more adequate explanation. Rightly understood, these effects are merely symptoms of what happens when the true spiritual center of life is lost. Integrity is more a derivative of faith than a deliberative action. It demonstrates the victory of faith over the self and over the world. It reveals the way actions are determined by what

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one considers to be ultimate reality. The character of that to which the individual commits himself as being ultimately significant in the act of faith determines the spiritual content of his personal life and propriety in behavior.

Integrity that sustains the self is lost through commitment to a concern which is less than God. The false prophets referred to in the text were contemporaries of Jeremiah for whom the approval of compatriots constituted ultimate concern. During the Babylonian crisis which the Hebrews experienced in the sixth century B.C. these prophets falsely, but expediently, proclaimed in the name of Yahweh that he would not suffer his holy city to be taken and his temple desecrated by his foes. Their predictions found ready credence and applause because they were designed to support the wishes of their hearers. These men upon whom history conferred the appellation "false prophets" are an example of how idolatrous faiths rob the self of its essential independence and destroy personal integrity.

Again, personal integrity is destroyed when the self is alienated from its true spiritual center. The inauguration of the modern era coincided with the annihilation of man's spiritual center through the naturalization of life — a process which preceded Protestantism and the rise of inchoate industrial capitalism. The Renaissance sought to protect the spiritual center of life, but it was followed by a humanism which isolated man from this center by converting him to a faith which falsely affirms the autonomy and self-sufficiency of natural man. The victory of humanism meant the repudiation of trans-natural authority. Having lost the notion of a transcendent authority over life modern man became a slave to himself. The science and technology he invented to liberate himself from nature have resulted in the growth of a technical mass culture which frees him from nature only to enslave him once again.

Separated from his true center, man surrenders himself to the crowd in order to escape the fearful emptiness of existence and give content, purpose and security to life. This results in the replacement of personal integrity by the "groupism" and "conformism" described in Waldo Beach's *Conscience On Campus,* reflected in David Riesmann's "Other-directed Man," William H. Whyte's "Organization Man," and Karl Jasper's outline of the "Mass Man." The enslavement of man always follows the elevation of that which is limited and partial to the position of ultimacy. Faith in a reality which transcends man and society alone can recover the spiritual center of life and provide an authentic basis for integrity.

Because his integrity was an expression of his faith in Yahweh Jeremiah did not compromise his message. He stood against kings, priests, prophets, and people because his ultimate concern was the God of history who led the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt and who now was prepared to act in judgment against their sins.

Christian conviction maintains that faith arising out of man's encounter with Christ is the source of genuine integrity. The story of Zacchaeus' confrontation with Jesus dramatizes this point. Having experienced the transformation of faith, Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Integrity here is not a matter of moralistic legalism, rather it is that living response to the love of God revealed in Jesus the Christ which seeks to establish fellowship with men.

Viewed from this Christian perspective, integrity is not an antecedent virtue but a ceaseless striving to achieve responsible selfhood in the context of authentic community.

O God, give us the soul of the rebel to resist evil in every form and to maintain personal integrity in the face of criticism and public pressure. Help us to live courageously so that we may be worthy to be called Thy children. Amen.

A Prayer by One of Us

GRACIOUS God, the heavens declare thy glory. The whole earth proclaims thy praise, yet only man — of all thy creation — is capable of discordance, prone to evil and slothful in good. Hear our prayer of confession which springs to our hearts out of the tragedy and confusion which engulf us all. Our sins are ever before us and we do not seem to discard them as we live our days before thee.

The sin of hatred and prejudice is intensified by the fact that we have different colors of skin, and is unrestrained, even though we know that thou hast made of one blood all the races of men to dwell upon the face of the earth as brethren. The sin of idolatry is everywhere in evidence because we think more of possessing than of giving, more of security than of challenge, and more of power than of character.

We implore thy forgivness. We seek the promise that the burden of transgression will no longer be a hindrance to our progress to the City of God. We pray that thou wilt enliven us with prophetic vision and poetic insight, that the days ahead of us may reveal a new America to the world; one that practices what it preaches, one whose citizens are men and women of integrity and one which is marching to the divine music of the words: "After darkness — there shall be light!" Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. — *Herbert Beecher Hudnut, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Michigan.*

Rebuttal

MAY I say that I feel a strange lack of Jesus and the apostles as well as Moses and the prophets in the section of "Art in the Pulpit" [December issue] having to do with *Sanctuary* and *Baby Doll* type of art. The kind of argument presented suggests to me a soft accommodationism and a kind of servile obsequiousness before the popular idols of our discipline-resisting, sensation-addicted era. I cannot doubt that sex is exploited in this kind of literature, and that this exploitation is rationalized into an honorable sociological pursuit, as if motivated by genuinely human and even religious concerns.

Joseph Wood Krutch stated:

> International amity was increased . . . [by] a new ideal of the eternally feminine as represented by Brigitte Bardot. . . . As for the campaign against prudery and puritanism of which many of us still living remember the earliest beginnings, it was by the end of the Fifties so completely triumphant that the most recent work of our most talented playwright had a castration as its climax and one of our best-selling novels concerned the reciprocal seductions of an experienced satyr and a sub-adolescent nymphomaniac. Thanks to the latter work "nymphet" became, along with "Sputnik" and "beatnik" the most significant addition to the vocabulary, . . .*

Those who read Mr. Krutch in "Reflections on the Fifties" in Saturday Review of January 2, 1960, know the satire of these lines.

I believe that the so-called realism of this type of literature, "the unabashedly honest picture of seamy life," is spurious and bogus. The accusation about condemning "certain works of art *merely* because they are seamy" misses the point entirely. Nor is there a question of divorcing oneself "from a valuable source of insight into the very life Christ came to redeem." This last suggestion is, I believe, inane and ludicrous. The question is one of superfluity to the place of transparent and blatant obviousness, needless stirring of vulgar subject matter to the place of morbidity, and the waste of God-given time and talent that should be put to constructive use. If in our day of news dissemination in the manner of the daily press we still need sex aberrations and perversion further portrayed, we do not have the capacity to learn in any case.

That realism either is not the interest and motive or is misguided in this kind of literature is evident from its virtual preoccupation with illicit and abnormal sex behavior. True and responsible realism is concerned to depict life in balance and whole, at least implicitly, awakening the awareness of human strength as well as weakness, virtue as well as vice, forces that redeem life as well as forces that destroy. Our "unabashedly honest" pictures amount to an obsession with the lurid and shocking, raising the difficult-to-avoid conclusion of exploitation — both of sex and of a public that is well known to be easily enticed and victimized. One would have to be naive indeed about the powers of rationalization and self-deception of the human mind to think that such art is motivated by serious, well-considered concern for human redemption, reverence for life, or other altruistic motives. One would have to be naive also not to recognize that with all our "honesty" and "frankness" about sex, sex irregularities and sex crimes have greatly increased. I fear that if we have no misgivings here we have lost our powers of objectivity and discrimination.

Perhaps we have become so eager to conform to leaders of "modern" and popular schools of thought, to avoid the appearance of possible "Victorianism," and to be in step with the fashion makers of the time, that we are beguiled into the comforts of amiable accommodationism and peace when we should be at war. Will Herberg spoke recently of a general moral decay which is not merely an increased violation of moral standards but a serious disintegration of the standards themselves. "Not the good man but the good fellow is the ideal," he said. This, I fear, is the danger and condemnation to which we must confess, and I wonder how the kind of literature here in question can help save us from either.

WILLIAM JANSSEN
First Presbyterian Church
Normal, Illinois

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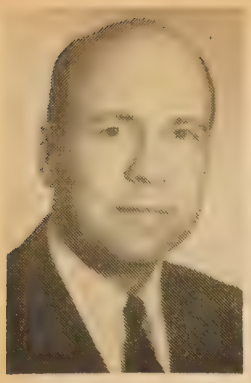
A Lenten Prayer

HERE are our lives, O thou great Creator God, who has made the universe and stationed the stars in their courses. Thy handiwork is seen at its most cunning when thou madest man and breathed into him the very essence of thine own life.

Here are our lives, O Lord, frail, incomplete, often fearful, but our lives none the less. Precious to us beyond the wealth of the Indies, teach us that they are so precious to thee that thou didst redeem them on the cross in the person of thy Son Jesus Christ.

Here are our lives, Father, purchased with a great price and a love past finding out. May we both dedicate and use them to thy glory in the simple things of everyday existence: dressing and eating, working and playing, learning and teaching, laughing and loving, that all may be lived to thy glory.

Grant that these days may strengthen our lives for thy great name's sake. Amen. — *Hillyer H. Straton, First Baptist Church, Malden, Mass.*



Administration Is a Ministry

By James Gordon Gilkey, Jr.

THOSE who are responsible for the admission of candidates to the divinity schools preparing men for the ministry report that the quality of the applicants has never been better. On the whole, the average level of preaching, both as to content and form, is high in the church of America today. More attention is being given to curriculum and techniques of Christian education than ever before. The specialized skills of counseling are being conscientiously applied to parish calling and pastoral work. In short, the separate functions of the Christian ministry in American Protestant churches are probably being better served than ever before. Yet the whole ministry, in terms of the impact of the churches upon the lives of individuals and the community, seems far from adequate. A great deal of effort is being expended. Many people are turning to the churches. It is not yet apparent, however, that significant results are being achieved.

The difficulty may be that while the separate functions of the ministry at the local church level are being well handled, these separate functions are not being so co-ordinated that a total ministry to individuals and to the modern community is being equally well provided.

Such a problem is an administrative one: fitting the pieces together to do a total job effectively. Christian ministers instinctively recoil when the word "administration" is mentioned. "The less administration, the better the ministry" seems to be the prevalent attitude. A reappraisal may be necessary. Perhaps a look at the situation confronting the local church today will indicate that a ministry of administration is the necessary step to achieve the whole ministry which the church would render through its separate functions to individuals and the community in the modern world.

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The size of churches in the United States is growing and the number of churches whose membership is more than a thousand is rapidly increasing. Churches with memberships of a thousand or thereabouts differ fundamentally from those whose membership is less. One pastor alone can no longer minister adequately to all the Christian needs of such a church. The size of the church requires facilities and in many cases makes possible financial resources for a specialized ministry.

The growing urbanization of American society places more and more of our churches within an urban setting: the inner city, the mature fringe of the city, the suburbs, the "exurbs." Such churches in the Protestant tradition are not parishes, in the geographical sense, but "gathered congregations." Their members are attracted because such churches provide services not elsewhere available in the metropolis. The quality of the services rendered is all-important. The quality of preaching, education, counseling, provision for worship, fellowship, offering the sacraments — this determines the extent to which a church will "gather" a congregation in a metropolis.

The emphasis placed upon the quality of services offered in turn makes essential a ministry of specialized skills which can only be provided by a ministry of more than one man. At this point, the development of the local Protestant church has reached a critical stage.

Protestant churches, in general, have not yet developed sufficient administrative competence to provide a ministry in which several individuals are associated to meet the diverse and specialized requirements of the larger urban church. Group ministerial efforts, by whatever name they may be called, have not yet achieved the equilibrium and harmony necessary for ministering effectively to a metropolitan congregation. The unhappy characteristic of many such group ministries is that they either "come apart at the seams" periodically or are held together by such a dominant personality that intolerably heavy demands are made upon the self-respect of that individual's associates.

It is increasingly urgent for American Protestant churches to discover those principles whereby a ministry for larger churches can be provided through a team of ministers possessing both a variety of skills and a concept of the ministry as a co-ordinated and co-operative effort. The principles necessary are three: Structure, Personnel and Denominational Relationship.

The structure of a team ministry may be infinitely varied but whatever the variations, certain essentials are required.

The team must have a captain who will make the ultimate decisions. The head of a group ministry may delegate every responsibility save one: he must accept responsibility for making the ultimate decisions. His right to delegate some functions of the ministry and to make the ultimate decisions must be recognized by both the congregation and the other members of the team ministry. The captain must exercise this ultimate responsibility in every area of the church's life, business as well as spiritual.

Chief among the duties which must receive the ultimate oversight of the captain is the determination of who will be the other members of the team. However conscientious is the captain in consulting the lay officers of the church and delegating the task of making the initial search for men qualified to be a part of the ministry of the local church, in the last analysis his alone is the final responsibility for the selection of his associates. Only if this is the case will inter-staff relationships within the group ministry be satisfactory.

Obviously, the head of a group ministry will not exercise his authority in an irresponsible fashion. Should he do so he demonstrates his unfitness to be the leader. But he must possess the authority and have the courage and wisdom to use it when occasion requires or there can be no team ministry, but only a haphazard association existing in unstable equilibrium ready to explode at the first major difference.

The structure of the total ministry to be provided for the local church must be logical: it must include all the specialized functions of the individual ministers; it must denote which individual minister is to be held re-

New Books For Modern Ministers

A Guide to Church Ushering

By Homer J. R. Elford. A handbook of fundamentals for the church usher — duties, preparation, appearance — including detailed suggestions for assisting in communion, funerals, weddings, and other special services of the church. Also contains a suggested plan for organizing a church ushering staff. 64 pages.
Paper, 50c

Freedom Of the Pulpit

By Lee C. Moorehead. Freedom of the pulpit, the dangers which threaten it, its limitations, and the reciprocal responsibility of the congregation and minister toward it, are the subjects of this work. Some of the chapters: *The Crippling Effects of Acquiescence, The Necessity of Intellectual Toil, The Eloquence of Love.* 96 pages. $2

The Minister's Handbook of Dedications

Edited by William H. Leach. A collection of 55 dedicatory services for special occasions connected with the church. The services are divided into three sections: Part I is concerned with dedication of buildings and sites, and cornerstone laying ceremonies; Part II is devoted to dedications of furnishings and equipment; and Part III contains dedications for camps, hospitals, and parsonages. 144 pages. $2

Stories of Yesterday and Today For Juniors

By Alice Geer Kelsey. The 34 stories in this collection are characteristic of Mrs. Kelsey's unique ability to write with original approach and fresh appeal for children in the junior age group. Ideal for worship services or for private reading, the stories present a clear insight into the aspects of Christian living that are evident all over the world. Particularly helpful to all responsible for the spiritual education of children. $2

The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church

By John Knox. Recognizing the burden of the Christian teacher, whose responsibility it is to explain and apply the Christian ethic, Dr. Knox suggests principles for applying the New Testament ethic in such a way as to enable man to fulfill the righteous demands of God to the best of his abilities. He feels that "one is not less under obligation to do what one *can* because one cannot do all one ought." Index of scripture, names, and subjects. 128 pages. $2

The Minister As Marriage Counselor

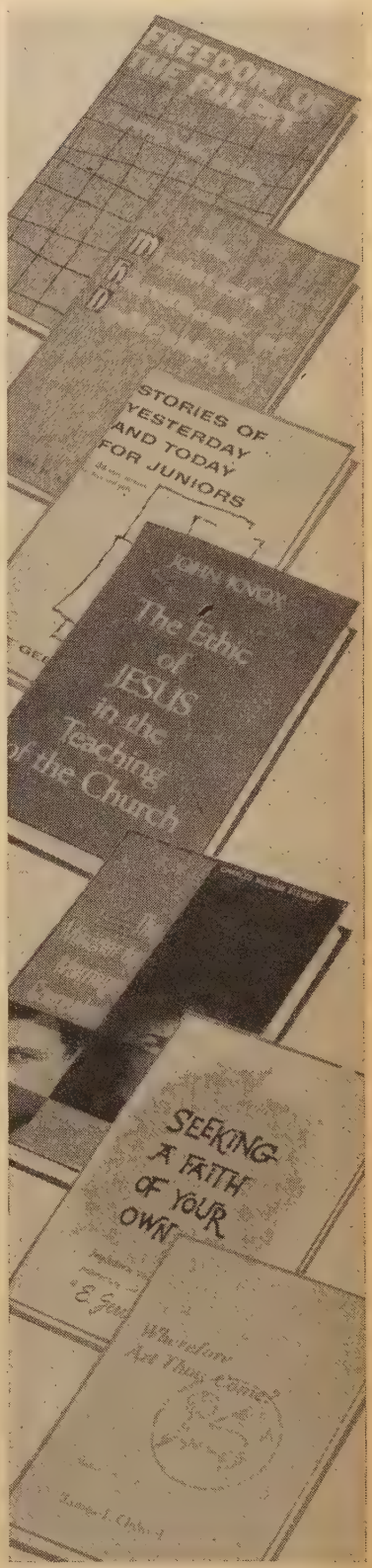
By Charles William Stewart. Writing in a clear, readable style, Dr. Stewart sets forth a role-relationship theory of counseling with sufficient case material on which to base an understanding of the counseling process. He points out the limitations on the parish minister as counselor and emphasizes the need for the church to face its responsibility for maintaining a family life program of education. 224 pages. $4

Seeking a Faith Of Your Own

By E. Jerry Walker. Eleven talks that deal with cardinal problems, frustrations, and perplexities confronting twentieth century teen-agers. Dr. Walker offers encouragement and guidance by challenging young people who will dare to accept the Christian way of life. Some of the talks: *Overcoming Temptations, When Dangers Threaten, Come As You Are.* $2

Wherefore Art Thou Come?

By James T. Cleland. Eighteen communion meditations written especially for use in the church service, plus instructions for writing and using meditations in lieu of sermons. The meditations show special concern for preparing the worshiper to receive the Sacrament and for clarifying the true significance of the Lord's Supper. 144 pages. $2.50



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sponsible for which functions and what is to be the administrative relationship between the individual ministers. The responsibilities and relationships of the members of the ministry must be mutually understood, be mutually acceptable and preferably be outlined in writing.

The structure of the ministry must also be understood by and be acceptable to the congregation. Furthermore, the structure must be logically related to the official structure of the congregation. The lay office-bearers of the church must understand, respect and work within the official structure of the church and the structure of the church's ministry. Likewise, the ministers of the church must understand, respect and work within the official structure of the church.

Granted these three essentials, the detailed structure and organization of a group ministry for the local church can be infinitely varied. The preaching minister is most frequently the captain of the team, but it is not necessary that he be so. The structure of the ministry will vary depending upon the specialized skills and emphasis which a particular congregation may wish and require for itself from its ministers.

The captain of the team, if he is himself to be responsible for a major function of the church's ministry such as preaching, education, extensive pastoral counseling or community service, must necessarily delegate to another member of the staff administrative responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day ongoing operation of the total ministry. There is no contradiction between the necessity of ultimate responsibility for making final decisions being in the hands of the head of the group ministry and the delegation by him of responsibility for the administration of the church's program to another member of the staff. The captain may, indeed, delegate administrative oversight for different parts of the church's program to several different individuals. For instance, he may delegate responsibility for the program of the church to a ministerial associate while responsibility for the church's physical maintenance and fiscal affairs is delegated to a lay business manager. In any case, the head of the group ministry must be certain that such delegation of responsibility is clearly understood by the staff and within the total church. He himself must respect his own decision to delegate responsibility. The importance of such delegation and the relationship between the captain of the team and that person or persons to whom administrative oversight has been delegated cannot be overemphasized.

The personnel of a team ministry, like its structure, may be infinitely varied in numbers and skills, depending upon the degree and extent of specialized services which a given congregation wishes to provide and has resources to maintain. The personnel may be composed both of ordained and lay people. In general, the structure of the ministry should not call for ordained men to be responsible in the performance of their ministerial functions to a layman. Professional men, ordinarily, do not work happily in positions which require them to be responsible to a nonprofessional in the performance of their professional duties. In short, it is probably a mistake for the head of a group ministry to delegate to the church's lay business manager responsibility for those functions of the church's program which are performed by ministers.

With these considerations in mind, several factors must be stressed in connection with the personnel of a team ministry. All members of a team ministry must be willing to subordinate their own individual status and skills to the total effort. The ministers must wish to be a part of a team co-ordinating their particular functions and making themselves a part of a whole which is greater than they are individually. It sounds easy, but in practice it is far from it. The most frequent reason group ministries fail is that one member of the team (sometimes it may even be the captain) tries to subordinate the team to inflate his own ego, and does not really accept the fact that he is a part of a whole ministry and total effort. He should not be an independent specialist who cooperates with his associates only upon his own terms and when it suits his purpose to do so.

All the members of a group ministry must acknowledge that other skills and specialties than their own are of equal validity and of significant importance in the total ministry being rendered to the church. Again it sounds easy, but in practice it is more frequently honored in the breach. (See 1 Corinthians 12:14 ff.) The preaching minister often thinks that his is the central ministry. The minister of education is secretly sure that the real nurture of the congregation is being done by him. The minister of music is convinced that people come to church chiefly to hear the music. The business manager may even feel that the comfort, cleanliness and solvency of the congregation are its major attractions.

The members of a group ministry must personally find their real satisfaction in the performance of their own functions as members of the team, and not be secretly yearning after some other responsibility — the preacher's, most often. If all the specialized ministries are equally valid, then one minister does not need to be jealous of another or defensive about his particular duties and responsibilities within the total ministry.

At this point, a change in the traditional attitude of divinity school professors as well as preachers may be required. The personnel problems of a team ministry will not be finally solved until the "image of a minister" which young ministers-to-be usually acquire in seminary is radically altered. Professors and preachers are prone to imply that unless a man be talking in front of other people, in an academic community or in a pulpit, that man is not really a minister of the first rank. Protestant churches will not secure members for a multiple staff ministry who are content, happy and respected members of a team until ministers themselves believe that they are fully ministers as part of a team and are not coveting for reasons of status or ego-satisfaction some other responsibility than the one which they have accepted within a group ministry.

It is perhaps surprising, but it is an obvious fact, that it is the "free" churches which are having the greatest difficulty in trying to develop a team ministry effective in a metropolitan community. One important factor seems to be the lack of any strong denominational tie on the part of many of the larger "free" congregations. This circumstance suggests that a "denominational relationship" may be as essential to a team ministry as is either structure or personnel.

An outside "authority," or, more specifically, an outside counselor, is better able to judge the soundness of the structure of the ministry and the characteristics of individual personnel than is either the congregation or the other members of the team. Those within the structure are frequently too close to see objectively and totally either the particular functioning of the ministry as a whole or the personnel situation.

The members of a team ministry frequently discover additional personal security in the knowledge that there is some outside "authority," some outside counselor, to whom they may appeal without being accused of disloyalty to the ministry or the congregation.

When changes in personnel need to be made within a team ministry, the aid and influence of denominational channels — accepted by both congregation and the members of the team ministry — are extraordinarily helpful in making such changes: discovering a position appropriate to the qualifications and skills of the minister making the change, and helping locate a minister qualified for the team.

The extent to which the denominational relationship is authoritative or merely consultative will depend upon the ecclesiastical tradition of the local church. In either case, the more completely acknowledged that relationship is and the more fully accepted is its counsel, the easier it is to create an effective and harmonious team ministry for the local church.

The authority which the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church has traditionally exercised over the local parish makes possible a team ministry on the local level which is today enormously effective in the metropolitan scene. We are reminded too that

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the Episcopal church, within the Protestant tradition, has many notable examples of an effective team ministry. Lutheran and Presbyterian churches seem better able to maintain stability, harmony and effectiveness within a team ministry than do their Baptist and Congregational counterparts. The Community churches, in this respect, are in the most difficult position of all. Looked at from a purely pragmatic point of view, the extent of a congregation's denominational relationship appears to be a significant factor in the development of a team ministry.

No problem facing the local church outranks in importance this problem of developing for the larger urban parish a group ministry in which several men co-operate to provide the varied and specialized skills a local church requires. The structure, personnel and denominational relationship of Protestant churches require careful attention. Administration is a crucial ministry. Upon the effective solution of the difficulties involved in developing a harmonious, loyal and effective group ministry for the local church depends that church's ability to serve its people and its community in the Name and in the Spirit of Christ in the modern world.

Book Reviews

THIRTEEN books aimed for the Lenten market reached our desk this season, and I assume they represent a fair proportion of all publishers' aims at preachers and readers this early spring. It is presupposed that ministers, overworked, will reach out for help and that laymen, more reverent than usual, will take out time to meditate. As I studied the books for purposes of review I asked myself three questions: 1) Will this book be likely to be around this time next year and still read by anyone? 2) If I were desperate for Lenten topics, would I reach out to this book for help? 3) If I were a layman in quest of devotional reading, would I find some new departures in renewal here?

One book passed the first test, two or three the second, and one or two the third. It seems as if the Lenten lists are still approached perfunctorily in the knowledge that whatever is printed will sell; it is time to break the mold into which Lenten publishing is settling, and discriminating purchases and limiting readerships will most likely provide the ultimate economic answer.

Five of the books are by Lutherans from Lutheran houses; one is by a Methodist, but Abingdon is represented by two books; two Baptists wrote two Baptist-printed books and two Episcopalians wrote, one book coming from an Episcopal house; only one Presbyterian author and firm is represented and only one Roman Catholic in those I chanced to see. Lutherans no doubt produce the most on this subject because they seem to have the most publishing houses, they follow the church year and make much of Lent, and their theology is Atonement-centered, so there is a constant quest for making what C. S. Lewis calls "the same old thing" sound somehow new.

Still overdone is fascination with the seven last words, which bid fairly to displace all other forms of Lenten liturgical concentration. Concentrating on these moments from the Gospels is a time-honored practice, but enough is enough, so far as the possibilities of newness in the publishing field are concerned. (Where are the "Seven Last Words" books of last year — I dare you to try to remember one, including the one you used!) In those that did appear this year I noted a general trend away from the Clairvauxyant concentration on the agony and a fresh interest in the power of God manifested in the wounds of Christ; otherwise generalizations are difficult. Why the seven words? I reason that six weeks of Lent and a weeknight of Holy Week are in quest of a convenient outline and this framework provides it.

Of the four books on the "seven" multiple, Robert F. Jones' *Seven Words to the Cross* (John Knox, $2.00) represents the most interesting turnabout, for he examines evangelical witness to the dialogue from the hilltop to the cross that Friday. Obvious illustrations sometimes tire the book's reader and the angle of vision, once established, permits too little freshening variation. Still, it is a beginning of newness. Perhaps from the literary viewpoint the finest of the four is Howard Hageman's *We Call This Friday Good* (Muhlenberg, $1.50), an attractive volume by a Reformed minister. Variations on a line of T. S. Eliot, they resort too often to the typographical reminders of rhetoric (!?!?) to flow as smoothly as they might; editors of well-preached sermons might keep this typographical problem in mind to the reader's benefit. Of less happy format is the collection of forty-seven meditations, *Living with the Seven Words* (Abingdon, $2.00), by John Alexander McElroy. But here is a bargain with variations, seven ways

f looking at most of the seven words why not make it forty-nine?). McElroy is typographically slow-going, as was Hageman, too cluttered by punctuation, and the whole impression is somewhat jagged. But now and again, McElroy with his double line of vision (7 x 7) comes up with a slant others forgot. Clarence W. Cranford's *The Seven Last Words* (Baker, $1.50) is the least original of the lot, and even quotes from other "seven last word books," but is serious even when not memorable. I kept feeling that the book was "all right" but wondered how the publisher chose this out of hundreds of other choices that must have appeared to be on a par with it.

Three books concentrate on the events of Good Friday. Erwin Kurth's *The Passion Pilgrimage* (Concordia, paperback, $1.50) is sprightly and sacramental (an underdone note in the Lenten series), but with little reference to our times and with an assumed interest in religious terminology and affection that can hardly be assumed in today's world. Paul H. A. Noren, *The Profiles of the Passion* (Augustana, paperback, $1.50), on the other hand, is much alert to our times; he makes a real attempt to break new ground. Incidentally, though the cover is singularly unattractive, the format might suggest a possibility: this paperback hardly appears to be any more substantial than a quarterly magazine; it seems almost designed to be thrown away after use. This may not be a bad idea: I would feel less uneasy about these books if I knew they were designed for a momentary function and that permanence of quality through the march of the years was not expected. Alfred Doerffler, *The Cross Still Stands* (Baker, $2.50), is quite conventional and often more sure of things than the Gospels seem to be; sometimes the pastoral note he is working with and noted for is submerged by a semihidden belligerence. His sources for reference seem quite outdated (Uhlhorn, 1879, on Roman crucifixion and charity, has been surpassed dozens of times) and too often an implied dogmatic structure obscures a lyrical potential in the sermons.

Three books are devoted to the unfolding of the self during Lent. William D. Streng's (Augsburg, $3.00) well-titled *What Language Shall I Borrow?* looks with some variety on the meaning of the crucifixion from a number of aspects. Loyal E. Golf tells us that *The Cross and Crises* (Augsburg, paperback, $1.75) was written in a time of family crisis and I can believe it; from the angle of personal interest this is one of the better volumes in the series. I think I would know without the introduction that this man is also properly preaching to himself and not just down to a crowd. Best of the three is Theodore Parker Ferris' *The New Life* (Seabury, $2.50), which introduces a considerable interest in the incarnation into the cycle of books. Of all those here reviewed, this is most addressed to people where they are.

One of a kind is Charles L. Wallis' convenient and helpful anthology, *Lenten-Easter Sourcebook* (Abingdon, $2.95), purchase of which would relieve the minister of many other purchases since, I have a hunch, most Lenten books are bought as crutches to help ministers over schedule humps. Wallis collects from a variety of sources and arranges well.

The Roman Catholic set of meditations on suffering is by Dom Hubert Van Zeller, redoubtable author of over forty books who has the not totally fortunate habit of illustrating with his own sculpture. His new book, with many good moments, is *Approach to Calvary* (Sheed and Ward, $2.95).

Now my vote for the most likely to prove durable, Reginald Cant's *Heart in Pilgrimage* (Harper, $2.50), an excellent study of the problems and attitudes of prayer. Rather than review it at length let me say that after faint-praising most of a Lenten dozen, this is the one book I personally want to use and draw upon this year.

For the most part, I hope publishers will put more originality into the 1962 Lenten quests. — M.E.M.

THE MEMOIRS OF RAY LYMAN WILBUR. *Edited by Edgar Eugene Robinson and Paul Carroll Edwards. Stanford University Press. $10.00.*

THE MAN NEXT TO ME. *By Anthony Barker. Harper. $3.50.*

THE CHRISTIAN AS A DOCTOR. *By James T. Stephens and Edward LeRoy Long, Jr. Association. $2.50.*

TO tell his own story in a book of 687 pages without sounding egotistical requires all of a writer's talent. Wilbur fails to bring it off. But the book does portray a man of tremendous drive who was a physician, educator (President of Stanford University), and public servant (Secretary of the Interior in Hoover's Cabinet). Because of his gift as a raconteur, his many contacts with the great and near great and his vast interest in all kinds of people Wilbur has written many interesting pages. Too often, however, he has marred his story by using pious aphorisms. Platitudes like "A little trouble now and then is a great developer of spiritual muscles," are sprinkled through every chapter. Apparently the church did not help him develop his spiritual muscle for his occasional references to it are not enthusiastic. He does award favorable mention to one sensible sermon he heard, the brevity of which seemed to impress him as much as the content. There are frequent sentimental passages; he cannot mention the name of Herbert Hoover without becoming starry-eyed. He speaks of Hoover's conception of dealing with the depression as "bold, ambitious and successful." Here is the story of a dedicated do-gooder who preached and practiced

The Minister and SOCIAL SECURITY

by Andrew Hobart
President,
Ministers Life & Casualty Union

Age, death and disability loom in the future of even the youngest minister. Social Security furnishes a basic foundation on which to build protection against the great risks of dying too soon, becoming disabled, or outliving the income years.

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the doctrines of hard work and individualism. *Memoirs* resembles the picture we get of the author, very earnest and very conventional.

If church members who contribute reluctantly to missions would read Barker's book they might double their pledges. Here are the down-to-earth experiences of a missionary doctor and his wife in a tribal reserve in Zululand, South Africa. Crude equipment, impossible housing, untrained assistants — the Barkers accepted these without complaint and with much good humor. Dr. Barker chooses to take his readers inside the lives of individual Zulu nurses, patients and missionaries rather than to discuss *apartheid* or South Africa's political troubles. Humble and completely honest, he admits his professional limitations and his mistakes as a physician, but it is not difficult to understand how he won the confidence of the people he served. The book is frank, sometimes stark, always compassionate.

Does the fact that a physician is a professing Christian enhance his skill as he uses scalpel, pill and hypodermic needle? Dr. Stephens thinks it does, but he says plainly that the application of his faith to the needs of his patients does not require that he "coat his practice with pious rituals designed to make it seem Christian"; for example, prayer with a patient before an operation. He says, "To choose a career in medicine out of genuine interest in both its biological and personal dimensions, and to continue to work in it with a sense of interest and meaning, is the proper nature of a Christian vocation as a medical doctor." The reader is offered a candid discussion of the tangled ethical problems faced by a physician who has a tender conscience. Stephens explores the dilemmas encountered in a doctor's group relations and in medical economics, with honest discussion of the fee practice system. The writer sets forth his views on euthanasia, how he counsels a patient who has terminal cancer, how he works with a hypochondriac, and how he "breaks the news" to a stricken family. The treatment of each topic is lucid, straightforward, and in balance. — *Walter L. Cook, Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine.*

LAUGHTER IN THE BIBLE. *By Gary Webster. Bethany. $2.95.*

HUNDREDS of years ago, so runs one of Canon H.R.L. ("Dick") Shepherd's inimitably well-told tales, a great many monks arrived in Canterbury Cathedral after an appalling journey from Italy. So rejoiced were they at arriving at their destination, and so glad at being allowed to worship in the peace of the lovely centuries-old English cathedral, that during the singing of the *Te Deum* their hearts bubbled over, and they burst into peals of merry laughter, and were, perforce, ejected by the seneschal or whatever the vergers of those distant days were called.

We often say that laughter is akin to tears, but how seldom do we realize — as "Dick" Shepherd did in the telling of his tale, and Gary Webster has done in the writing of his book — that sometimes when our neighbor is laughing it is only because he is choking back his tears, and sometimes when a young girl is giggling she is getting closer to the Kingdom of God.

In this well-produced book, the author turns the searchlight of his serious and lively mind on the main aspects of laughter referred to in the Bible — on "amusement, mirth, delight, satire, sarcasm, wit, scorn, irony, and joy." Readers will fairly relish his analytical treatment of the multifaceted theme. They will come to know some of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles as real men, amusingly and attractively alive, before they became bearded beings in the stained glass windows of churches.

This is the sort of book that both parsons and parishioners should beg, borrow, or buy. Its perusal will not provide them with fuel for poking fun at others, nor will it cause them to crease up into tucks of uncontrollable laughter. A reading of it will result in something really more worthwhile and necessary in our time of the church's history: the reconciliation of those two things, gaiety and gravity in the lessons of the Old Testament, and in the life and teachings of Christ, that form the shining secret of the best brand of living. — *Johnstone G. Patrick, First Presbyterian Church, Sayre, Pa.*

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Pulpit Calendar

Mar. 5 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 12 — 4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 19 — Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 26 – Apr. 1 — Holy Week.
Mar. 26 — Palm Sunday.
Mar. 30 — Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 31 — Good Friday.
Apr. 1 — Easter Eve.
Apr. 2 — Easter.
Apr. 9 — 1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 16 — National Christian College Day.
Apr. 23 — 3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 30 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 5 — May Fellowship Day.
May 7 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 7 – 14 — National Family Week.
May 11 — Ascension Day.
May 14 — Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).
May 21 — Whitsunday (Pentecost).
May 28 — Trinity Sunday.
May 30 — Memorial Day.

THE TRADING POST

[You are invited to make free use of these sermon ideas, outlines, texts, thought primers, illustrations and quotations provided that for each one used you submit one of your own of equal quality and originality. Send all items for exchange to The Trading Post, The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. Items accepted will be published with the name of the sender. — Ed.]

Three maxims:

"All growth that is not toward God, is growing to decay." — *Macdonald*

"Never let a man imagine that he can pursue a good end by evil means, without sinning against his own soul." — *Southey*

Paul's three little words:

"For" — 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

"Now" — Romans 8:1 and elsewhere

"Therefore" — Romans 12:1 and elsewhere

Three men to remember: Giordano Bruno, Edward Bushel, Hugh Miller. Look them up.

Three questions waiting for us in heaven: Where have you been? Whom did you serve? What did you do?

Three Jews to Choose from: Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Jesus of Nazareth.

Three claimants to truth:

The Balcony: Mussolini shouting from the Palazzo di Venezia.

The Academy: The scientist who finds yet does not find.

The Secret Place: Jesus praying in a garden.

Printed sign in a bank teller's cage in Rochester, N. Y.: "The Great Business of Life: Something to Do; Something to Love; Something to Hope For." And beneath the last phrase in pencil the words: "one million dollars."

"We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they are sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." — *From Death Camp to Existentialism*, by Viktor E. Frankl,* (Boston: Beacon Press). — Submitted by Rev. Ted Richardson, San Antonio, Texas.

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PULPIT POST

(Continued from page 2)

as I discover it in the Scripture, and testify to it, the Word becomes an impersonal theological statement about God instead of a living reality.

3. *What do the people need to hear?* I work in the hope and the faith that once I have discovered the Word of God and have identified myself with it, I will also discover that this is indeed what the people really need to hear.

Perhaps these three questions will be of help to others in the preparation of sermons.

HAROLD L. SAWYER
Central Christian Church
Warren, Ohio

WHAT LARGE LETTERS . . .!

SIR: I'm sure that it was through no fault of *his* that the letter (Jan.) insisting upon the lower-case "holy catholic" . . . "church universal" was ascribed to REUBEN A. TANQUIST! The contrast does provoke comment.

If to him Holy Catholic Church might suggest "Roman," I submit Protestants have a ready answer, as the man who recently said to me, "My mother was a Baptist, but my father was a Christian"!

May I suggest to him that we methodists and episcopalians and others might write ourselves a bit smaller and save the biggest letters for the biggest concept of the Church.

Pilate said, What I have written I have written, and Christians have been content to let the INRI of the Cross stand there in big letters. In some such way must our Lord's Church stand before the world.

At the least, please, keep it "Holy."

NORMAN T. SLATER (sic)
The Episcopal Church
of the Good Shepherd
Norfolk, Va.

[We would like to, but the Protestant Episcopal Book of Common Prayer has it "holy Catholic Church." — Ed.]

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